

Page 12

We have come a long way. Last month the Catholic Bishops of England instructed the faithful how they should approach the vote, but not once did anyone call them agents of a foreign conspiracy. That accusation is now reserved for believers in the European Union.

The first officially appointed Rolex stockists in the UK. The Goldsmiths Group is probably the country's leading chain of quality jewellers and has over 40 branches where stock Rolex. To find your nearest Rolex stockist, call FREE on 0800 220 733.

news

Hairless good boyo creates dazzling effect

To begin at the beginning. It is afternoon in the great brown, gothic brown, MP bobbing, minister yelling House. And on a green bench at the front, William Hague - Secretary of State for Wales and very good boyo - is alternately answering questions and dreaming of leading his party.

Destined for greatness, Hague seems to radiate light from an opening in his head. This is because his pate, almost entirely devoid of follicular product, is for some reason the shiniest at Westminster. Other hairless heads are matt finished, but Hague's is done in skin-coloured deep-gloss, polished with an expensive chamomile by an extremely competent and vigorous chamber-maid. To-



DAVID AARONOVITCH

gether with his agreeable smile, the effect is - literally - dazzling. A Yorkshireman himself, all around him he bears the lift of the valleys, as Welshmen (no women), ask and reply to questions. Win Griffiths (Lab, Bridgend) speaks in Chapel language of youngsters being "imbued with moral purpose and direction". The hirsute

and virile-looking junior minister, Gwyn Jones (who is as hairy as Hague is smooth) delivers himself of non sequiturs and absurdities, in a beautiful, almost musical voice. "Anyone in any doubt about Labour's lack of priority for the health service, should look at what they've done to education," he says at one point.

But it is Alan Williams (Lab, Carmarthen) who really gets things moving. Mr Williams suffers two disabilities: one - that he has a voice exactly like Gladys Pugh from Hi-de-hi - is involuntary. The other - a hair-cut borrowed from Ringo Starr in 1964, and never subsequently restyled - is of his own making. He raises the case of a Mrs Tattersall and her seven children,

who inhabit three rooms in Llandoverly. His colleague Allan Rogers (Lab, Rhondda) asks how many are on the housing waiting list in Wales. The minister is indignant - of course they don't have figures for the homeless, and no historians will force them to produce any. But he can tell the House, apparently, how many new trees have been planted in the principality. Which leaves the strong impression that the Welsh Office is far more exercised by treelessness than homelessness. "What about tree-houses?" heckles one Labour member.

The shadow Welsh Secretary Ron Davies, with that handsome plausibility which characterises so many Welsh

politicians, is baiting the Tories over law and order, which can "only be restored by spanking schoolchildren and shooting burglars". This is a reference to Welsh Tory, Walter Sweeney (majority 19, Vale of Glamorgan), who is sitting opposite. Mr Sweeney, a large, half-varnished wooden man (who looks like something that I once made in woodwork class, but decided not to take home) apparently believes in instant and summary justice for burglars. If I saw him late at night, canvassing in my driveway, I'd certainly wonder where I'd put that Olympic .22 calibre handgun.

Mr Sweeney is a fan of yet another Welshman, Michael Howard, who is presenting his Bill for banging everyone up for

ever. Harrying him from argument to clause is my final Welshman, Alex Carlile (Liberal Democrat, Montgomery). Mr Carlile is retiring at the next election, and that is the only sense in which he is retiring: in every other way - with his curling lip and glasses half-way down his nose - he is wonderfully arrogant. For every smooth-clision of Howards, Mr Carlile has the answer. If the government had thought sentences too lenient, how many had the Attorney-General appealed to have increased? No reply. Weren't some criminals going to have less supervision and shorter sentences as a result of the proposed legislation? Apparently so. We will miss Mr Carlile.

significant shorts

Tories reject Brussels ban on leaded fuel

A European Commission proposal to ban leaded petrol from the end of 1999 is to be opposed by the Government.

The Commission strategy for reducing emissions from cars from 2008 was discussed by environment ministers last month, and agreement is expected next June.

But the transport minister, John Bowis, has told MPs that it is "unnecessary and inefficient to impose a ban on leaded petrol as proposed". While the aim of reducing leaded petrol sales was "laudable", Mr Bowis said in a memorandum for the Commons European Legislation Committee that the British had over the last seven years used preferential taxation to promote leadless petrol sales.

That had contributed to a reduction in airborne lead of over 70 per cent. *Anthony Davies*

Drunken plane brawl may cost dear

A father and son who forced a holiday flight from Tenerife to Birmingham to divert after a mid-air brawl could face a bill of thousands of pounds from the airline.

The father, Michael Rogers, 45, and his son, 17, were taken from the plane after a fight broke out between them. The father was charged with assault on the aircraft.

A company spokesman described it as a "dispute and said it had been 'inhibited'". He added that they could be liable for the extra cost of the extra fuel that had to be burned off for the plane to land in Lisbon.

The 200 other passengers on the plane were forced to endure a four-hour delay.

Youth 'held fake gun to boy's head'

A 15-year-old youth has been accused of making threats to kill after an imitation gun was held to the head of a pupil in a school brawl.

The youth, now at college, will appear before Birmingham youth court next month after a fight between three pupils at a school in Acocks Green last week. He will face charges of making threats to kill and possessing an imitation firearm.

Dead addict 'feigned illness'

A policeman told an inquest yesterday that he thought a prisoner found dead in a cell had been feigning illness before his death.

PC David Ennis said he believed Leon Patterson, 31, had been trying to evade being interviewed over a shop robbery for which he had been arrested.

Patterson, a heroin addict, was found dead at Denton police station, Greater Manchester, four years ago.

A jury at an earlier inquest said that Patterson, of north London, had been unlawfully killed and that he should have been transferred to a prison hospital. It had heard the cause of death was "unascertainable".

But the police overturned the verdict in the High Court, which ordered a new hearing. Patterson's family allege he was beaten by officers. The inquest is expected to last two weeks.

Gates warns party leaders on UK visit

Bill Gates, the multi-billionaire head of the Microsoft, the world's biggest PC software company, met John Major and Tony Blair in separate meetings yesterday during a 36-hour visit to the United Kingdom. According to Microsoft, he spoke to the two party leaders about the importance of government and business working together to improve the use of computers and the Internet, both in schools and in business.

But he warned that British businesses are not taking full advantage of the Internet, and could lose ground to international rivals. He also said that if children do not have access to computers, they could fall behind those growing up in better equipped schools abroad.

Charles Arthur

Isle of Wight favours poll on self-rule

A majority of residents of the Isle of Wight favour holding a referendum on self-government, according to a Mori poll for the island's county council.

Seventy-three per cent said they would be in favour of the referendum - but most also said they would vote against independence. Politicians on the island are concerned that the Government is doing nothing to combat high unemployment. They would like to make the island a free port and tax haven to boost investment. *Steve Boggan*

Mayhew dampens Unionist talks fear

David McKillick
Ireland Correspondent

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, last night sought to calm Unionist concerns over a conduit for talks which it has opened with Sinn Féin by insisting that the Government was saying nothing in private that it was not already saying in public.

Speculation yesterday centred on the immediate and long-term intentions of the IRA, the implications of any new ceasefire for political talks, and Unionist suspicions that the government might contemplate a deal with the republicans.

In what amounted to a key government characterisation of the channel of communication, which involves the SDLP leader John Hume, Sir Patrick said: "If somebody represents to us that a restatement of our policy, in language that is clear and unequivocal would be helpful, then we will obviously want to consider that."

Sir Patrick's comments did not succeed in dispelling distrust within David Trimble's Ulster Unionist party, and were greeted with disbelief by the Rev Ian Paisley. A spokesman for the UUP Jeffrey Donaldson said: "Given the evidence of the weekend, we would be very suspicious that there is a form of tie-lacking going on between government and Sinn Féin."

Whether it's through Mr Hume or other intermediaries one cannot be sure.

Mr Paisley said: "The more they say they are not involved the more I think they are, because they have lied so much in the past. It seems to me an attempt is being made to buy off the threat of violence in Northern Ireland and the mainland by getting concessions to the IRA-Sinn Féin so that they can find an easy way into the talks."

"It's going to be another colossal sell-out and another colossal conditioning of the people to accept IRA - Sinn Féin on their terms."

But at the same time as the talk of contacts filled the air, the new RUC Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, delivered the latest in a series of police warnings that more "spectacular" IRA attacks were to be expected in Ulster and in Britain.

He added, however, that he believed an internal debate was going on within the republican movement. On reports that a full-scale IRA "army convention" had been held at the weekend, he was less sure than some security sources have been of late, commenting: "I think there was a meeting of sorts. I am not going to say it was a convention."

In Irish Taoiseach, John Bruton, said he knew nothing of an IRA convention, but believed serious rethinking was going on within republicanism.



A day in the life: Keith from Skipton with his portrait at the '30 Days 30 lives' exhibition by photographer Barry Cawston which opens today for two weeks at the Candid Gallery, Islington, north London. The YMCA commissioned the series to illustrate its work with young adults. Photograph: John Lawrence

Six crucial facts about the fax machine you're about to buy

- 1. FAXING** Technology has moved on and value for money has increased. So before you buy any old fax machine, take a good look at the new plain paper M3700 from Muratec. It costs only £449 (+ vat). Yet it's a lot more than just a fax machine.
- 2. PRINTING** Check that your new fax has a built-in class 1 modem, so it can be connected to your computer and used as a high quality printer and can send and receive faxes directly to or from your PC. The M3700 does all of these.
- 3. SCANNING** Make sure it has a computer interface so you can use your fax machine as a scanner and import images into your PC to illustrate your document files. The M3700 comes ready to plug into your PC.
- 4. COPYING** Consider the importance of a plain paper fax that can be used as a low volume or back up copier. The M3700 produces plain paper copies that don't curl or fade.
- 5. ANSWERPHONE** Look for a fax that incorporates a high quality digital answerphone with automatic voice/fax switching facilities. The M3700 gives you this - plus crystal clear messages.
- 6. THE FAX SUPPLIER** Buy from a company that specialises, Muratec only make faxes, so we have to be the best. We build fax machines with all these value added features built-in, not bolted on.

So before you rush out and buy an ordinary fax, send for details on the multifunctional M3700. We'll also send you a FREE Guide to Fax Facts which contains a lot more details about buying faxes, call **0345 626782**.

muratec
the fax specialists

No. 1 Stoke Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4HW
Tel (01483) 302100 Fax (01483) 301900
<http://www.muratec.co.uk>

Group 'undermined entire bank system'

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

An elite group of criminals plotted one of the biggest crimes in history and seriously undermined the entire banking system, a court heard yesterday.

The gang, including Kenneth Noye, the man wanted for the M25 road rage murder, joined forces to steal hundreds of millions of pounds from cash point machines in an international swindle, the court was told. But the operation, which involved using corrupt British Telecom employees, was foiled when police caught the gang red handed.

Noye, who is one of Britain's most wanted men and is currently in hiding abroad, was named in court as an important associate of the team of senior underworld figures.

Seven men yesterday admitted conspiracy to steal cash from banks, building societies and financial institutions and

face up to seven years in jail when they are sentenced next month.

Judge Jeffrey Rivlin QC, said: "The conspirators had dreams of realising vast amounts of money possibly running into hundreds of millions of pounds."

The criminals had intended to bribe BT workers to tap into the lines that run between cash dispensers and the main banking computers. Confidential information from customers would have been downloaded using computer equipment, decrypted and used to make thousands of bogus cards. These would then be used to withdraw money from cash points throughout the world.

The court heard that the conspiracy was foiled when a computer expert, turned informer, Martin Grant was recruited by the gang while serving 16 years for attempting to murder his wife and her child.

The police caught the gang when they raided the home of one of the conspirators in July 1995 and found five of the men along with computers ready to encode tens of thousands of cards.

Ann Curnow QC, for the prosecution at Southwark Crown Court, said: "Had the conspiracy succeeded, the banking system of this country would have been put at risk."

John Lloyd, a "close associate" of Noye was described by the judge as "one of the main organisers" of the scam.

Noye, 49, is the prime suspect for the M25 road-rage killing of Stephen Cameron, 21, who was stabbed to death at Swanley, Kent, in May.

The gang members are John Lloyd, 57, Paul Kidd, 36, Graham Moore, 32, Stephen Seton, 65, William Hayward, John Maguire, 36, all from Kent and Stephen Moore, 41, of Leytonstone, east London.

Old will bear brunt of NHS shortfall

David Walker

Old people, the mentally ill and the disabled are those who will have to bear the brunt of any shortfall in health funding, health managers said yesterday.

The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts has estimated English trusts need at least £200m, less than 1 per cent of total NHS spending, to see them through to the end of the financial year in March. The NHS Trust Federation says that to avoid ex-

tending waiting lists or other cutbacks £300m extra is needed.

If these assessments prove accurate patients needing non-urgent surgery, such as hip replacements, would see their appointments deferred and the length of time they have to wait for their operations increased. Community care would also suffer. Hospital trusts would postpone paying their suppliers and put off planned building work.

But health trusts will try to sustain accident and emergency,

cardiac and children's services and ambulances are unlikely to be turned away. "Trusts providing acute care are acutely aware of the political sensitivities," said one manager cryptically.

Health trusts cannot end the year in deficit so, failing any increase in their budgets, they would obliged to make savings in the five months that are left.

Many trusts have already exceeded the budgets for treatment allocated to them for the whole of 1996-97. If they continue to treat patients at current

rates, they run into the red. Though still only partially complete a survey of NHS trusts conducted jointly by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Health Financial Managers' Association, has found a third reporting a very difficult situation.

According to health analysts the root cause of this is the Government's decision to base the £33bn (for England) NHS budget on its estimate of spending rather than what trusts and authorities had spent by March

last. Some experts say the system started the year £180m short of what it needed to maintain last year's care.

After allowing for inflation, the amount of real growth in NHS spending for 1996-97 was minimal, which contradicted the Government's promise of growth.

Professor Chris Ham, of Birmingham University, an expert on health finance, said: "Needs and demand have continued growing, so it is not surprising that hospitals are running into serious problems."

Somew
letters



Post
the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

Somewhere my love...Pasternak's passionate letters to his own Lara set to fetch £500,000



Poignant exchange during Stalin purges

Steve Boggan

On screen and off, it was one of the most enduring love affairs of the 20th century. Those who saw the screen version will remember Omar Sharif and Julie Christie, as Dr Zhivago and the enigmatic Lara, in the Russian revolution epic.

But in real life, too, there was love and tragedy. For the character of Lara in Boris Pasternak's Nobel prize-winning masterpiece, *Dr Zhivago*, was based on his mistress, Olga Ivinskaya, the woman he loved until he died, in May, 1960.

The extent of their relationship, through Stalin's purges and despite periods of separation and imprisonment, has now come to light in a series of love letters, manuscripts and poems shortly to go on sale — at an estimated £500,000 — at Christie's in London.

In them, Pasternak confirms that Olga was indeed the Lara of his novel, and he demonstrates his love for her throughout their hardships. The two spent much time apart, he in Tbilisi, she in Leningrad, and his letters, discovered after Olga's death last year, often demonstrated a wish that they could be together.

"As always, I love you most deeply, but I'm sure you are neither aware of it, nor see any proof of it, and simply don't notice," he wrote in February, 1959.

"For my part, if I can hope that everything will remain as it was before our recent exchange of words, I would be in a state of perfect bliss. To imagine anything better than this would be inaccessible, beyond my power. I fancy I see something very, very good

ahead of me, something undefinable and undeciphered, a part of which I experience in advance as I embrace and kiss you in my thoughts."

Pasternak was awarded the Nobel prize for literature after his novel surfaced in Italy in 1957 — the book was not published in the Soviet Union — but he was forced to turn it down.

He was continuously harassed by the authorities and Olga herself was twice imprisoned in a gulag because of her relationship with him.

After rejecting the prize, he wrote that he had been "changed by the years of Stalin's atrocities, at which I grieved before they were exposed."

In his final letter, dated 5 May, 1960, he says he is convinced that he will recover, but goes on to describe the pain of illness that he cannot share.

"The razor falls from my hand from the stab of pain in my shoulder-blade," he wrote. However, he adds: "The factual evidence (the cardiogram and so forth) make it possible to believe that I shall recover. I already feel a little better."

Pasternak died of a severe heart attack, brought on by lung cancer, at 11.40pm on May 30, 1960.

Although Christie admits that many of the letters and a collection of poems do not translate well, experts are nevertheless convinced that a figure of £500,000 will be reached by the sale.

Peter Collingridge, a specialist in books, manuscripts and Russian works of art at Christie's, described the love letters as "absolutely beautiful." They will go on sale on 27 November.



Life and love: Boris Pasternak's letters to his mistress, Olga Ivinskaya, (above, right) are a moving testimony to their affair and the basis for *Dr Zhivago*, made into a film starring Omar Sharif and Julie Christie (left). Photographs: Glynn Griffiths/Ronald Grant Archive

...as Kipling's pile of rubbish goes on sale

Hazel Cavendish

Previously unpublished letters and manuscripts by Rudyard Kipling, stolen from him by a disgruntled secretary, go on sale today at a Chichester auction house. The papers give a remarkable insight into one of Britain's most popular authors and are expected to prompt international interest.

Overlooked for almost a century, the documents narrowly escaped destruction when they were discovered in a chest of drawers delivered for a country sale in Sussex. When a carrier emerged as Britain's favourite in a national poll last year, "Does anyone want this pile of rubbish from the drawers?" A saleroom porter recognised the two brown paper parcels of documents as a significant collection of a writer's work, containing 40 manuscripts, letters and documents.

They reveal Kipling's dislike for the founder of the Salvation Army, General Booth, his hatred of seeing his work adapted for stage plays and his refusal to allow fox hunting on his land because it might be damaged.

The archive also includes several heavily corrected versions of his story *With The Night Mail*, based on Kipling's sea voyage from the US to England, which appeared in *McClure's Magazine* in November, 1905. The various versions of the story will be invaluable to students of his work in showing how Kipling revised and re-revised a story before he allowed it to be printed.

Other scripts include two short stories which appeared in the *Daily Express* of 1900, *A Burgher of the Free State* and *Way that He Took*, as well as an

early version of *The Outsider* with autographed alterations. His secretary, Miss K E Parker, quit and took the papers from Bateman's, Kipling's country home in Burwash, East Sussex, after complaining he and his wife treated her "like a common typist" while expecting "work of quality".

The collection was bought at a junk sale around 30 years ago by a local collector who lived on the Sussex coast. They were sent to the auction room by the collector's widow.

The author and poet is best known for his poem *If*, which emerged as Britain's favourite in a national poll last year.

Kipling enthusiasts from the United States and Canada are expected to join many private collectors from Britain bidding for the collection of annotated letters and drafts of short stories.

Two of the main bidders are expected to be the University of Sussex, which has one of the world's largest collections of Kipling's work and possibly the University of Dalhousie, in Canada, which is known to have a substantial holding of Kipling manuscripts.

Leonie Ormond, Professor of Victorian Studies at the University of London said: "I think it's very exciting, absolutely riveting."

Lisa Lewis, meeting secretary of the Kipling society, said the writer and his wife would authorise some versions of his work that were different than what was published, but never marked with his handwriting.

Instead, they would give leather-bound volumes of material to universities and others. "Mrs Kipling was a bit of a control freak."

BT pulls plug on phone museum

Chris Goddard
Business Correspondent

While BT executives toast their £13bn takeover deal with the US long distance phone giant MCI, the company is considering pulling the plug on Britain's national telephone museum due to lack of funds.

The BT museum, tucked away beneath a concrete multi-storey car park near Blackfriars Bridge in London, houses countless treasures in the UK's proud technological history from the discovery of the telephone in the 1830s.

Saved from closure earlier this year it has been passed, unwanted, around BT's internal bureaucracy and has yet to be allocated further funding for the company's next financial year, which begins in April.

Insiders are convinced the museum, which employs six staff, will not survive, despite attracting 23,000 visitors last year. "We just don't fit into the corporate structure any more. They see us as a drain on budgets," said one source.

The cash shortfall is thought to be in the region of just £500,000, a drop in the ocean compared with the £2.2bn BT is proposing to pay out to its 2.3 million shareholders in a special dividend next autumn. Ironically, the cash gap is virtually the same as the annual basic salary of BT's chief executive, Sir Peter Bonfield.

Staff at the museum have already begun the sad process of giving away exhibits which, though not valuable in money terms, have a priceless place in British industrial history. Thousands of old telephones, switchboards and memorabilia are housed in an unnamed warehouse near Heathrow Airport. They include 17 vintage GPO vans and crates of bakelite handsets which have never even been catalogued.

The Museum of National Telephony opened in 1982, the year after British Telecom was split off from the Post Office as the precursor to privatisation. It takes visitors through Britain's dominant contribution to the history of telephony, from the huge expansion of the telephone network during the 1840s railway boom to digital communications revolution of the 1990s.

BT said last night that a final decision on the museum's future had yet to be taken. "One can never guarantee the everlasting future of anything, but at the moment it's business as usual," a spokesman said.

My hellish journey across Europe, by kidnapped mother

Hugh Pope
Istanbul

The bizarre three-day ordeal of Hertfordshire secretary Joanne Norris ended yesterday when a Turkish court released both her and the estranged Turkish husband who had kidnapped her and smuggled her across the breadth of Europe.

"I'm not too bad now. My husband did not hurt me. I have absolutely no idea why he did it, but maybe his motive was to get the family back together again. The court released us both after I said I would not be pressing charges," said Ms Norris, 30.

"I even asked him to drive me to the airport so I could go home. He agreed, but I think the police may supervise that," she added, speaking by telephone from a courtroom in the town of Edirne, close to the Turkish border with Bulgaria.

Ms Norris said she was alone when she was seized from her home at Knebworth in Hertfordshire on Friday night. She said her boyfriend was tied up when he stumbled in on the kidnapping. She was then put in the back of a caravan or caravante and smuggled through the Channel Tunnel on the Shuttle.

"I couldn't be seen or draw attention to myself. They had hidden me under a coat," Ms Norris said.



Joanne Norris 'I am not too bad now, but I have no idea why my husband kidnapped me' Photograph: PA

She was met on arrival in France by her husband and her eight-year-old son, who lives in Turkey in the legal custody of his father. Ms Norris said she had left her husband in 1994 after eight years of living together in the Turkish resort town of Kemer.

A friend of her husband's was also with them as they then drove non-stop across Europe towards Turkey. Turkish police said her husband was using her old Turkish passport to get her

through international frontiers. "Three times I thought about trying to escape, but it was the middle of the night, I had no money and no passport. What was I supposed to do?" Ms Norris said.

Finally they arrived at the Turkish border post with Bulgaria on Sunday afternoon. Turkish police there had been tipped off about the kidnapping by a fax from Interpol. They arrested the group and sent them

to Edirne for questioning.

"The Turkish police were basically sympathetic, but like lots of people in Turkey, they could not understand why I would not get back together with my husband and son. They are very much family orientated here," Ms Norris said. She said that after the court released them her first priority would be to find a seat on a plane back to London, even though that meant leaving her son behind.

"Of course I have hard feelings about all this," Ms Norris said. Turkish law usually awards custody of children to the father, and Ms Norris said that one day she might sue for custody of the child in the Turkish courts.

Two men appeared in court yesterday charged with kidnapping Ms Norris from her home. Derek Neale, 34, of Devon Green, Vange, Basildon, Essex, and Derek Lazell, 45, of London Road, Basildon, Essex, are jointly charged with the kidnapping and unlawful imprisonment. Neale and Lazell, both ex-servicemen, only spoke once to confirm their names during the five-minute appearance at Stevenage magistrates' court.

Both were remanded in custody for a week, to appear at the same court on 11 November. There was no application for bail. Hertfordshire police said that a third man, aged 27, had been arrested in connection with the kidnapping.

Rel-last back.*

You can now be in Zurich by 9 a.m., board a connecting flight before 10, and beat many London nonstops to your European destination. After business, take an early evening flight to Zurich and our 8:50 p.m. to London.

You couldn't spend your day much more efficiently than that. And better cared for by Swissair hospitality.

The catch? You'll have to be an early bird (but not necessarily a night owl).

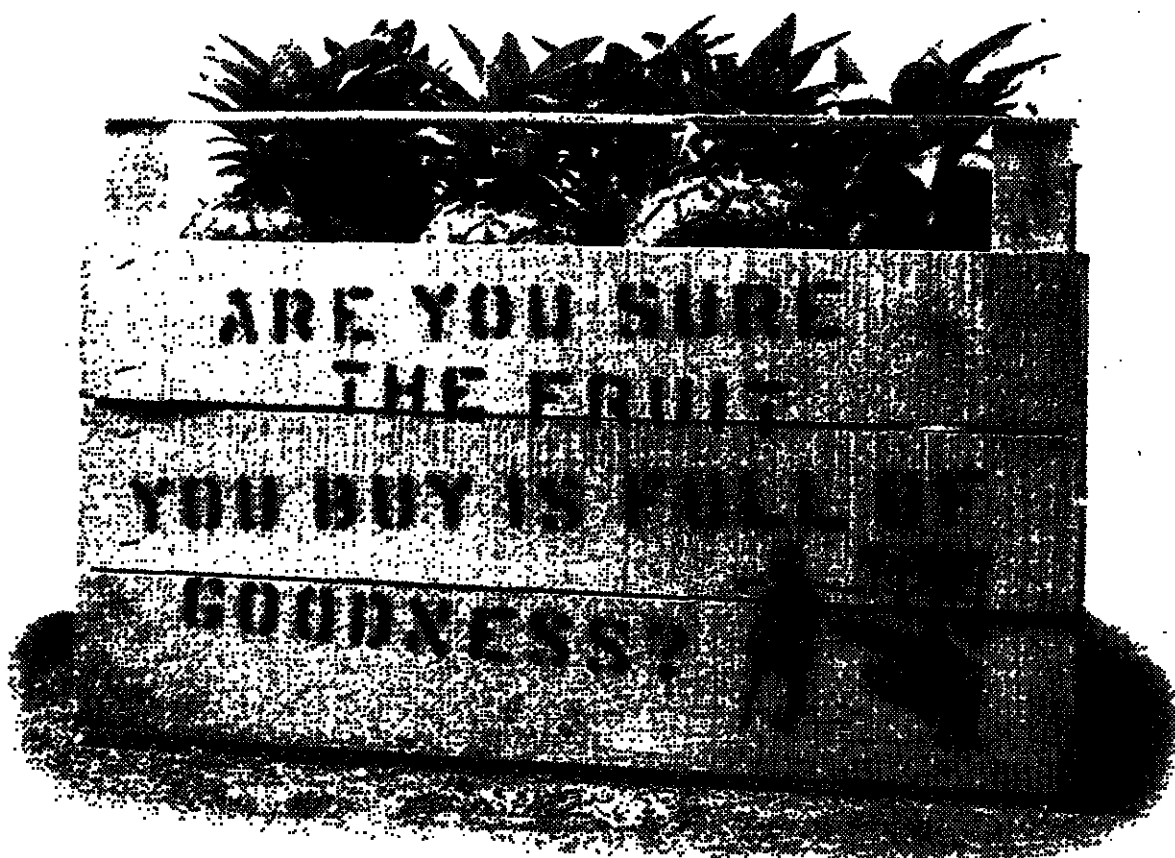
swissair world's most refreshing airline.

shortfall

news



House music: Members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra giving a recital in the sitting room of Heather Kemp's council home in Hastings, East Sussex, as part of an initiative by the local council to increase awareness of classical music. Photograph: Andrew Hasson



"I saw an accident when a friend fell from the truck taking us to the plantation. The tyre ran over his leg and he was sent to the company dispensary. They amputated his leg. He got no compensation and had to bury a plastic leg with his own money. The man has not worked since the accident." PINEAPPLE PLANTATION WORKER, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Amputation without compensation in the pineapple industry of the Dominican Republic.

Dismissal for not working overtime in the grape industry of Brazil.

The fruit in your supermarket trolley may look wholesome and appetising, but there's often something rotten inside.

The misery beneath the clingfilm. It doesn't stop at fruit. There are heart-rending stories of exploitation behind produce like vegetables, nuts, flowers, coffee, even prawns.

The details vary, but the themes are consistent enough: low pay, tin-shack housing, unfair dismissal, child labour.

It makes you angry and it makes you want to do something. Well you can.

Why not a boycott?

A boycott isn't the answer because it

can make things even worse for the growers and pickers by taking away the market. And in any case, you can't always tell just by looking which products involve exploitation and which don't.

The answer is actually more inspiring: it's to encourage your supermarket to ensure fair pay and conditions for the producers of all the goods it sells.

Change the rules

Supermarkets have astonishing financial muscle. Some British chains have incomes bigger than the entire economies of Third World nations. When that kind of money talks, people listen.

Supermarkets are increasingly sensitive to social issues, and they care what their customers think.

So let them know you want them to help change the rules of global trade.

The Supermarkets Third World Charter

The first step is to ask your local supermarket to embrace the Supermarkets Third World Charter, which aims for fair prices and conditions all the way along the production chain.

Send the coupon or call us at Christian Aid for an information pack that shows you the simple action you can take next time you shop.

"There are families with four, five or six children who must live off 54 peso (about £2.45) per day."

The words are those of a pineapple plantation worker in the Dominican Republic. In making your supermarket listen to you, you're making them listen to her, and to millions of people like her throughout the Third World.

Send the coupon now or call us on 0345 000 300

I want to know what action to take. Please send me the information pack.

Name

Address

Postcode

Send the coupon to: Christian Aid, Freepost MR8192, Manchester M1 9AZ

Christian Aid
We believe in life before death

Court told of official's 'Pretty Woman' relationship

The taxman, the hooker and a love story

Graham Bell

A senior Inland Revenue official became so besotted with an escort agency woman that he lavished thousands of pounds of gifts on her, including designer clothes, expensive watches and Mediterranean holidays, an Old Bailey court was told yesterday.

Michelle Corrigan, a former model, was giving evidence in the trial of Michael Alcock, an Inland Revenue inspector who is accused of taking bribes.

Miss Corrigan said she was introduced to Mr Alcock, a married man, by Hishan Alwan, an oil dealer with whom she used to have sex for money.

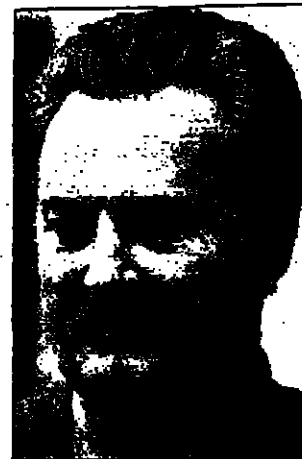
"He asked me if I'd be interested in meeting one of his friends and I said yes. I didn't have a name but was told that he was English," she said. She met Mr Alwan at an apartment in Maida Vale, north-west London, where he gave her a white envelope containing £200. He then introduced her to the tax inspector and left. After the first meeting Mr Alcock contacted Miss Corrigan and arranged to see her again.

She said that at the second meeting Mr Alcock was dropped off at the Maida Vale address in Mr Alwan's Mercedes. John Black, for the prosecution, has told the court that Mr Alcock had previously investigated Mr Alwan's tax affairs. Mr Alcock, 47, Mr Alwan and David Shamoun, a wealthy property developer, deny 17 charges of corruption.

Miss Corrigan said that she met Mr Alcock in Maida Vale about 12 more times and on each occasion Mr Alcock gave her money for sex. "Every time I met him he gave me a cheque or cash, sometimes £150, sometimes £200 but it was usually about £200," she said.

The jury was shown a cheque for £3,000 signed by Mr Alcock in 1990 to benefit Miss Corrigan. She said that the money was to help her to buy a car. "I bought a Peugeot 205GT and Mr Alcock also helped me to pay for the insurance," she said.

At one point in their relationship it was alleged that Mr Alcock used his influence with



Michael Alcock: 'Became besotted'

Miss Corrigan to arrange a woman for Christopher Furze, a junior colleague, and that Miss Corrigan slept with Mr Alcock and Mr Furze slept with the other woman.

However, over a period of months a relationship developed from being that of one between a prostitute and a client to one that could better be described as an affair. This development occurred around the time that Mr Alcock took Miss Corrigan on the first of two holidays in September 1991. The couple first stayed at a luxury villa close to the Marbella beach club in southern Spain. Later they enjoyed another luxury break in Majorca.

The court was told Mr Al-



Michelle Corrigan: Given many gifts

cock also paid £1,500 for six months' rent for Miss Corrigan's flat in Portsmouth and cleared a £1,000 credit card debt.

The jury was shown a receipt for £675 for a watch bought by Mr Alcock for Miss Corrigan in December 1991.

Mr Black asked her to describe some of the other gifts she received from the tax inspector, whose salary at the time of his suspension was £45,000. She said: "He bought me clothes, shoes, make-up, coats. They were generally designer outfits costing between £300 and £600. He also bought me a coat for £400 from Harvey Nichols."

Mr Black has claimed that the money to finance these gifts came from "ghosts", wealthy foreign businessmen who had paid Mr Alcock to conclude favourable tax settlements.

Miss Corrigan said that throughout their relationship, which lasted approximately three years, she did not know what Mr Alcock did for a living and believed that he was a financial adviser. Just prior to the end of their affair in 1992 she said Mr Alcock told her he was putting money away for their future. She said: "I started looking at properties in the Portsmouth area. I thought we were in love."

Anthony Arledge, QC, for the defence, compared Mr Alcock's affair with Miss Corrigan to the plot line of the Hollywood film *Pretty Woman*, and Miss Corrigan agreed with Mr Arledge when he said that while the couple began in a client and prostitute relationship they quickly fell in love.

Miss Corrigan, a tall slender figure, was wearing a bright green jacket and matching green miniskirt. She said that she did not consider herself a prostitute. She said: "I consider a prostitute as someone hanging around on a street corner and advertising in phone boxes. I was introduced to these people and they would give me money. That is not the same as hanging around on the corner of the street looking for it. I was quite happy to sit there talking to him. I did not want to dive in, take my clothes off and jump on top of him."

The trial continues tomorrow.

Theft gangs target church furniture

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Criminals are targeting churches and stealing valuable furniture, which they sell in antiques markets and shops in Britain and overseas, the police said yesterday.

The warning follows a spate of break-ins at churches in the south-west of England. Previously thieves have tended to concentrate on stealing church ornaments, such as crosses and chalices.

But in the past few weeks furniture has been seized from more than two dozen remote churches in the West Country. In one police division, north Devon, 28 churches have been broken into so far this year.

Some of the items stolen from the churches in north Cornwall and north and mid-Devon may have been sold

abroad, particularly to the United States, the Devon and Cornwall police believe.

Ornate tables and chairs were among many items taken from the churches while they were open to the public.

The recent theft of a 19th-century dark oak chair worth £1,500 taken from St Mary's at Molland, near South Molton, north Devon, was the latest in a series of raids on four parish churches under the Rev Bob Shorter.

Thieves had struck five times in three years at his four churches on the edge of Exmoor, taking furniture including a captain's chair, two Victorian side-tables and a Victorian chest of drawers, together worth hundreds of pounds.

"It does rather appear thieves are coming looking for stuff that they presumably have a market for. Churches are

easy targets - and most of us feel you cannot get much lower than stealing from a church," he said.

He had been told that thieves sometimes posed as visitors to see what was in the church, before returning to steal.

"So far our churches are left open and we are reluctant to lock them, but we are now having to think more about that," said Mr Shorter.

In recent years churches throughout the country have suffered from an upsurge in thefts.

In Norfolk, where there are a large number of isolated churches, some of the stolen goods have been traced to antiques markets abroad, including a stained-glass window that was recovered in Japan.

Chief Supt John Savage, of Norfolk constabulary's crime prevention unit, said: "We have a lot of medieval churches, which contain very old and valuable furniture."

"Break-ins can hit small village communities very hard - it's rather like an assault on them."

In Suffolk the police published a crime-prevention booklet for vicars and church wardens following a spate of thefts. Since improvements to security the number of break-ins has fallen dramatically.

Country churches were a favourite target for antique and furniture thieves, said Brian King, of Ecclesiastical Insurance, which covers 95 per cent of Anglican churches.

"Since the 1970s antiques prices have rocketed, therefore churches have been attracted thieves' attention as being a good source," he said. Much of what was taken was sold abroad. Attacks on churches had risen, with insurance payouts rising from £3m in 1989 to £4.5m by 1992. Mr Shorter recommended security marking and photographing valuables; putting fakes on display instead of the originals, or locking them away altogether.

DAILY POEM

One of the first poems to be written underneath the English Channel or maybe the first

By Adrian Mitchell

*The bones of galleons and their wide-eyed crews,
Haunted by jelly-fish and purple mussels -
They're overhead, stuck in historic ooze -
As our train mumbles through the dark to Brussels.*

Coming Back Again

*As our train mumbles through the dark from Brussels -
They're overhead, stuck in historic ooze -
Haunted by jelly-fish and purple mussels -
The bones of galleons and their wide-eyed crews.*

Adrian Mitchell's *Collected Poems* (Bloodaxe) were published at the end of last month, amongst them this short poem written on the Eurostar just 10 days before publication. Mitchell made his reputation in the late 1960s as performance poet of what used to be referred to as "agitprop". His most nakedly political poems - about nuclear war, Vietnam, prisons and racism - became part of the folklore of the Left, sung and recited at demonstrations and mass rallies. But there has always been a softer, more fantastical side to his output, and his ability to re-experience the world as a child is a rare gift.

Blair gets backing for draft manifesto

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Tony Blair yesterday won Labour on notice for an early election after more than 90 per cent of party members voted for the party's draft election manifesto.

He said the Government had damaged the country by drift and dithering, adding that Labour would do all it could to push the Prime Minister into an early election. "I don't know whether we are going to be able to push them out before they jump but if we possibly can, we will," he said.

The death of Barry Porter, the Tory MP for Wirral South, reduced the Government's notional majority to one but the Tories have had comfortable majorities in voting in the Commons in recent weeks.

The Labour leader refused to commit his party to "guerrilla tactics", getting a maximum turnout of MPs and forcing votes at all hours, which were used by the Tories under Margaret Thatcher to weaken the then Labour government of James Callaghan before they delivered the final blow in 1979. "We will pursue any tactics that are responsible," Mr Blair said. "The sooner this government is brought to an end the better because they are not doing anything."

If Mr Blair's commitment to bringing down the Government is to be fulfilled his team will have to do more to hurry it in the final session of Parliament. There are fewer late-night sittings and a confidence vote to bring down the Government

would require the support of all the minor parties including the Ulster Unionists.

The draft manifesto, *New Life for Britain*, will form the basis of the platform on which Labour goes into the election but the final manifesto will be drawn up by the leadership when the campaign is launched.

"This massive 'yes' vote gives us the best possible platform in the run-up to the election," the Labour leader said. "I am saying to every member of the party, 'It is time to raise our game once more. It is time to build on our success and step up a gear.'"

Blair and John Prescott, the deputy leader, hailed the endorsement of the draft manifesto as a remarkable result. Mr Blair said it meant that the head and the body of the party were marching in step.

There were, however, more than 11,000 members who voted against though it is not known whether any MPs did so.

The Labour leader and his deputy both took part in a last-minute telephone canvass of supporters and dismissed doubts about the fairness of the ballot as cynicism on the part of the press and critics outside the party.

The results were: Individual party members, yes, 95 per cent (218,023); no, 5 per cent (11,286); turnout, 61 per cent (230,402). Number eligible to vote, 380,688.

Affiliated organisations, including unions: yes, 92.2 per cent; no, 7.8 per cent; turnout, 24.2 per cent. Number eligible to vote, 2,613,690.

What party members voted for

Cut class sizes to 30 or under for 5- to 7-year-olds, by using money saved from the assisted places scheme.

Labour says this will cost £77m a year, but children already at private schools on subsidised places will be allowed to finish, and it would still cost the state sector to take children who would have gone on the £139m scheme next year, so the initial savings will be small - although the cost is relatively brief anyway. Fast-track punishment for persistent young offenders, by halving the time from arrest to sentencing.

The average wait for young offenders is four-and-a-half months, although it might be different for the persistent sort. The speed-up is supposed to be paid for out of legal aid savings which are unconvincing but, again, the cost is small. Cut NHS waiting lists by treating an extra 100,000 patients, as a first step, by releasing £100m saved from NHS red tape.

On present trends, the NHS can expect to treat 240,000 more patients next year than this year anyway. To raise that to 340,000 is a demanding target, which will cut waiting lists.

The £100m savings are again unlikely: the Government ditched three months ago the requirement for internal invoices in the NHS market - the main "paperchase" which Labour hoped to abolish. Get 250,000 under-25-year-olds off benefit and into work, by using money from a windfall levy on the privatised utilities.

The only pledge that costs big money, about £1.5bn, but why ask electricity and water consumers and shareholders, including pension funds, to pay for it? Set tough rules for government spending and borrowing; ensure low inflation; strengthen the economy, so that interest rates are as low as possible. Meaningless guff.

Grandeers warn Howard against 'race for votes'

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

Michael Howard was warned by two Conservative former Home Secretaries yesterday that his attempt to outflank Labour on crime was in danger of going too far.

Both Douglas Hurd and, more surprisingly, Kenneth Baker criticised the Crime Bill, the centrepiece of the Government's pre-election legislative programme, in the Commons.

Mr Hurd, who was Home Secretary 1985-89, warned Mr Howard and his Labour opposite number, Jack Straw, "Common sense, and the latest opinion research, suggest there's not really much profit for any of us - in treating any of these matters as a race for votes."

He asked if it was "realistic" to expect judges to give shorter sentences which would actually be served under Mr Howard's plans for "honest sentencing". Mr Hurd told MPs he thought the "expectation would prove fallible", because judges are under such pressure to hand out long sentences - pressure to which the Home Secretary was adding, he said. Mr Baker, Home Secretary 1990-92, said that the evidence of experience of minimum sentences in the United States was "at best not proven". He expressed concern at the possibility that second-time rapists might have an incentive to kill their victims.

And he said there was a danger in the Bill that the Prison Service would be diverted from its role in trying to restore criminals to society.

Meanwhile, Mr Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, found himself mocked on both sides of the House of Commons, for his failure to oppose the Bill.

The abstention of Labour leaders in last night's vote on the Bill last night marked the death of part of the party's soul, said Brian Sedgmore, the left-wing Labour MP and a barrister.

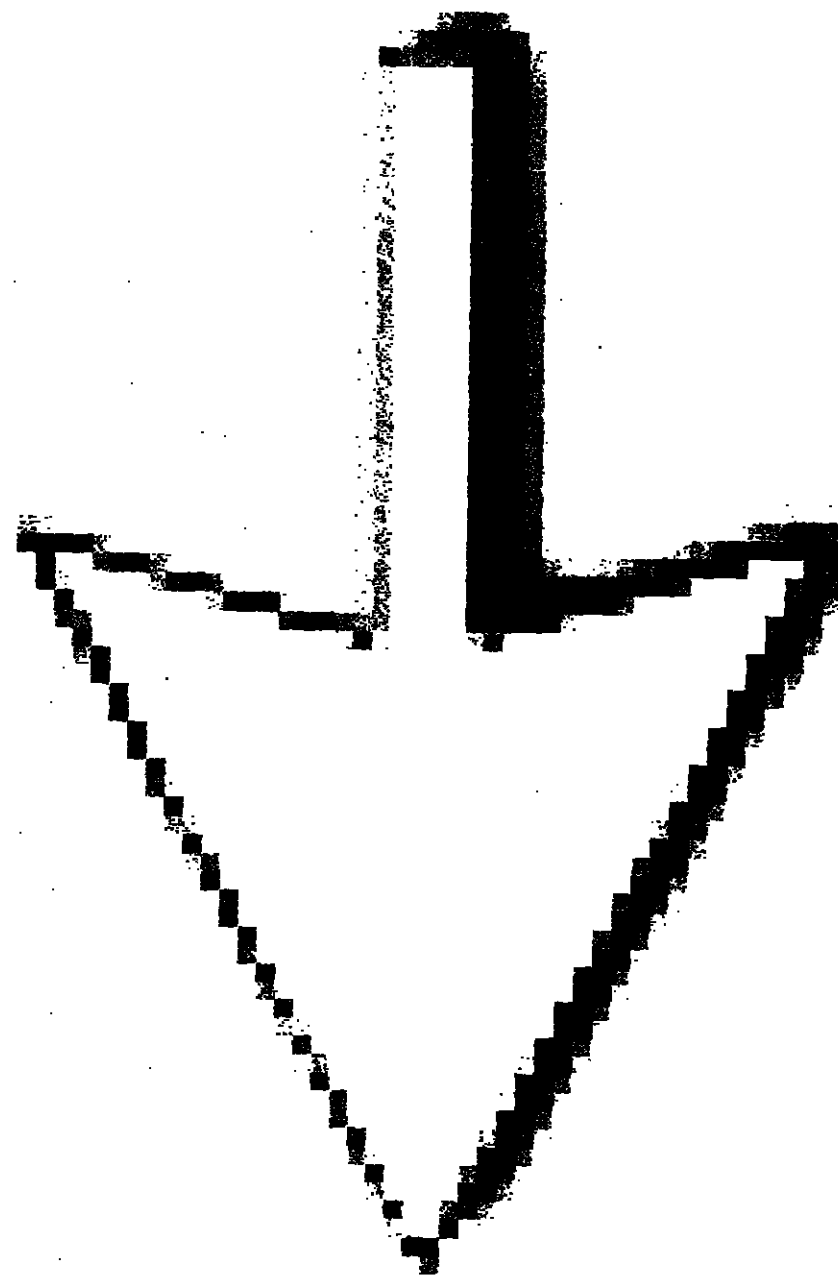
Announcing his intention to vote against the Bill, he said: "This Bill denies many of the basic principles of justice. It is one which will lead to the expenditure of billions of pounds of public money on building and running new prisons whose only discernible purpose is that of vengeance. Led by Jack Straw, Labour's front bench has responded lamentably. This is a shameful night for New Labour, a night when part of its soul died."

He added: "The benches used to contain a liberal tradition on penal matters - we recognise that as part of a consistent tradition. All that has been thrown to the winds."



Thought process: Sir James Goldsmith during an hour-long phone-in on Talk Radio yesterday. He said that his Referendum Party would be ready to fight the general election today if it was called and he emphasised that his family charitable foundation would be ready to give £20m if it proved necessary. So far his costs are £1.5m Photograph: Andrew Buerman

WHERE ARE THE PRICES OF OUR BUSINESS PCs GOING UNTIL 31st DECEMBER?



Compaq Deskpro 2000 5120 M1080 Intel Pentium® 120-MHz processor, 256 Kb Cache, 1-GB hard drive, 16-MB memory plus Compaq 140, 14" SVGA monitor



Compaq Deskpro 2000 5114 M1080 Intel Pentium® 133-MHz processor, 256 Kb Cache, 1-GB hard drive, 16-MB memory plus Compaq 140, 14" SVGA monitor



pentium®

All Compaq business desktop PCs have huge price reductions of up to 32%. As have Compaq notebooks and servers. And until the end of December, there are special promotion prices across the range of Pentium® and Pentium® Pro processor based Deskpro 2000 models.

A range designed with two goals in mind. Suiting the needs of any growing business and reducing the long term cost of ownership.

And you can save even more money because our special promotion prices also apply to Compaq 140 and new 15" V50 monitors. To take advantage

of the offer contact your reseller. Or, for a copy of promotion details, call

0990 50 00 20 from 8.30am to 8pm (9am to 5pm at weekends).

Tel: 0990 50 00 20

COMPAQ COSTS YOU LESS THAN CHEAPER COMPUTERS

COMPAQ

Offer closes 31.12.96. Offer valid while stocks last. Not all resellers participating. Check with your local reseller. Prices quoted are Compaq recommended prices and exclude VAT at 17.5%. Actual savings may vary. Photographs show 15" monitor; prices quoted refer to specification descriptions only. The Intel Inside logo and Pentium are registered trademarks of Intel Corporation.

news

Jail escorts free drug dealer after threat of being injected with Aids-infected blood, a new tactic increasingly used by criminals

Deadly hypodermics become new shotguns

Alan Murdoch
Dublin

The escape from prison at the weekend of a drug dealer whose brother was a notorious gang leader saw the use of one of the Aids-era's more sinister weapons - a blood-filled syringe. Syringes filled with blood have been used in dozens of inner-city Dublin robberies in recent years according to police. Criminals frequently claim the blood is Aids-infected when threatening their victims.

Michael Cahill, 33, the

younger brother of Martin Cahill, the late Dublin gang leader known as The General who was murdered by the IRA in August 1994, escaped from a Garda van outside Dublin on Sunday.

A heroin addict, he was serving a four-and-a-half-year sentence for a drugs conviction. He was being moved, handcuffed to a warder, to Cork Prison from Mountjoy in Dublin following a disturbance there on Saturday evening.

The Department of Justice yesterday began an inquiry into

the escape, which occurred when Cahill reportedly held the syringe against the head of one of the prison officers in the van and shouted: "He has a wife and kids. **** it, I will give it to him!"

The unarmed officers released him and he ran into traffic and tried, unsuccessfully, to hijack a car before fleeing into fields.

The inquiry will try to establish how the syringe was taken into the van, and whether Saturday's fracas at Mountjoy was staged to facilitate the transfer.



Lethal, and small: Syringes are hard for warders to detect

A few months ago another prisoner made his escape from a courthouse by using a syringe to threaten a guard, and in April another Dublin criminal, Thomas "Bomber" Clarke, also escaped from a prison van when

gunmen rammed it. Chris Finnegan, national secretary of the Garda Federation, said "more than 10" guards had been stabbed with syringes, though none had so far tested

HIV-positive as a result.

A colleague "went through a terrible torment for some time [while awaiting the result of an Aids test]. It's more frightening than an actual weapon. They [syringes] have now become the preferred way of doing jump-over-the-fence robberies in shops." Mr Finnegan estimated the use of syringes in robberies and other crimes had been increasing steadily for five or six years.

The most common victims, and the experience has led some north inner-city Dublin

shop-owners to close businesses. Other victims included two Italian tourists who were held up by a syringe-wielding thief who broke into their room in a luxurious hotel late at night.

Mr Finnegan called for armed guards in a follow-up car to shadow prison vans in the same way as large cash consignments were escorted. He said it appeared no security lessons had been learned from the earlier Clarke escape.

Liz O'Donnell, justice spokeswoman of the opposition Progressive Democrats, said

there had been 11 escapes from this year and demanded tighter security. She said the justice minister, Nora Owen, should explain how the prisoner got the syringe into the van, when there should have been a search.

A spokesman for Ireland's Prison Officers Association called for pepper gas and mace to be provided to prison escorts and for shackles to be used in transporting dangerous prisoners. Routine searches did not deal with the threat as prisoners had repeatedly concealed syringes inside the body, he said.

Happiness of the long-distance traveller as the sun goes down on the fly and flop holiday

Simon Calder in Istanbul hears that cheaper flights are hitting traditional tourist resorts

British tourists are turning their backs on the beaches, particularly among Mediterranean holiday resorts. Travel agents were told yesterday that 1 million fewer "fly and flop" European beach holidays were sold this summer. Greece, Malta and Cyprus are suffering especially, compared with more exotic destinations. And among skiers, France and Austria are being overhauled as the most popular winter sports destinations by Italy.

The Istanbul convention of the Association of British Travel Agents heard that holiday-makers are extending their horizons dramatically. The market research organisation Stat MR says United Kingdom visitors to Mexico have more than trebled over the past year, and bookings for next year are already twice as high again. In contrast, Cyprus lost one in five British holidaymakers last winter and is 11 per cent down on bookings for the coming winter. Recent violence on the Green Line separating the Republic from the self-styled Turkish Republic of North Cyprus may have contributed to the decline. But Len Mooney of the tour operator Sunworld said the trend towards long-haul travel is responsible: "Cyprus is suffering from cheaper long-haul holidays, particularly in the Caribbean."

Price remains the prime concern of British tourists. The only leading destination to buck the trend of a declining package holiday market this summer was Turkey. It added 15 per cent in visitor numbers, compared with a fall of 24 per cent for Greece. This week, Turkey was revealed to be the cheapest of all 20 OECD countries for tourists, with the cost of holiday-making just after that of the UK. The local currency is so weak that British visitors can become lira millionaires simply by changing £6.50.

Among skiers, price is also crucial. Bookings for the coming winter show Italy ahead of the traditional destinations. France and Austria, Bulgaria is performing strongly - with nearly double the number of bookings compared with last year - while Switzerland has lost almost half its market share.

Overall, numbers of winter sports holidays are a quarter lower than at the peak eight years ago, but Kevin Ivis of First Choice said the decline has now reversed: "Snow-boarding has helped to bring young people into the market."

Travellers' perceptions of risk have affected some parts of the world significantly. Florida has



Trading places: The table below shows holidays to destinations such as India (above) are rising while those to the Mediterranean are falling Photographs: John Voos/David Rose

LONG HAUL			SKI			SUMMER SUN		
95/96 season			95/96 season			1996 season		
Total	%	% change*	Total	%	% change*	Total	%	% change*
USA	51.2	24	Canada	5.4	247	Spain	52.0	-14
Florida	34.3	26	USA	5.2	123	Balearics	27.2	-13
Other USA	17.0	27	France	24.4	-10	Canaries	12.6	-18
Mexico	3.2	236	Austria	22.4	-15	Mainland	12.2	-11
Caribbean	19.2	20	Italy	19.0	37	Greece	18.5	-24
Canada	6.0	14	Andorra	8.1	21	Turkey	12.3	15
E/South Africa	3.9	-12	Switzerland	6.6	-45	Cyprus	5.1	-25
India	3.1	42	Bulgaria	5.7	120	Portugal	5.1	-15
					*latest year			

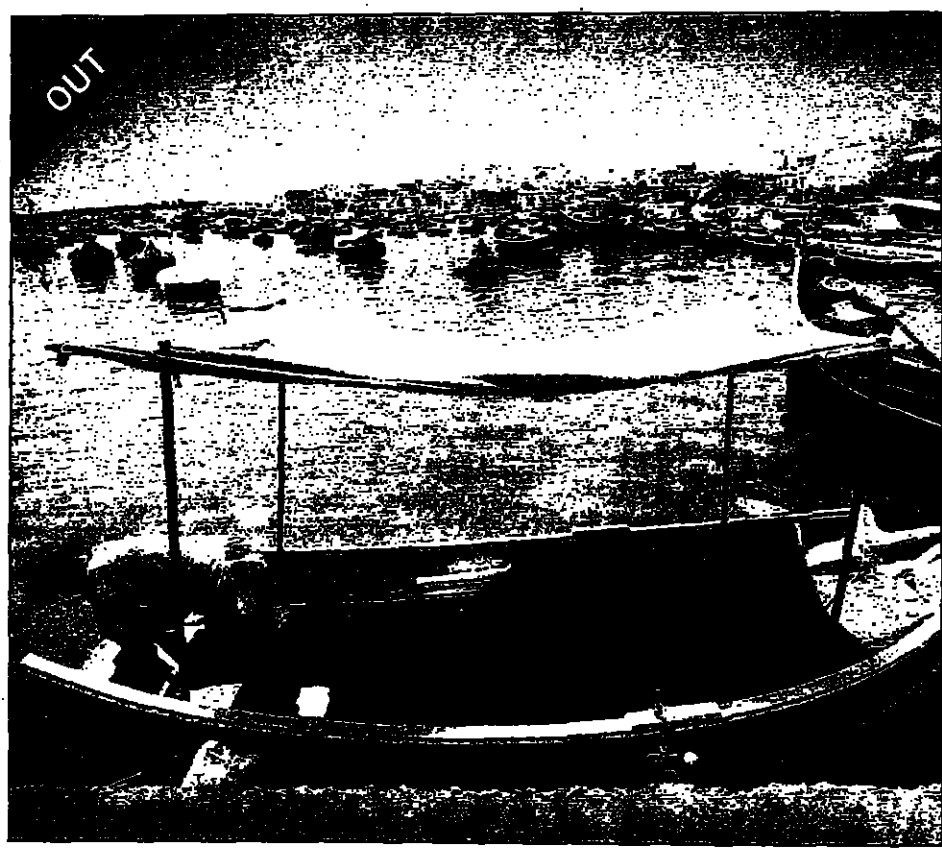
not yet recovered from the spate of attacks on tourists three years ago. Southern and Eastern Africa lost one in eight British visitors mostly because of a decline in tourism to Kenya. Conversely, India appears once again to be perceived

as "safe", with an increase of 42 per cent in the past year.

One tour operator warned of the dangers of trying to cash in on the rise of exotic holidays. Roger Heape of British Airways Holidays told: "Don't trash the market - don't do what you

did to the short-haul market."

The travel industry got a taste of its own medicine after the convention closed yesterday. Several delegates turned up at Istanbul airport to find the British Airways flight to Heathrow was overbooked.



Students denied choice by A-level disputes

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Universities should wait six weeks before rejecting applicants who want to appeal against their A-level grades, the head of the independent body on exam appeals said yesterday.

At present, universities accept and reject candidates in August, as soon as A-level results are published.

But Dame Elizabeth Anson, chairman of the Independent Appeals Authority for School Examinations, said exam boards had been trying to persuade universities to wait until the end of September before rejecting candidates who had missed their grades but who were appealing.

"Even if you appeal as quickly as you can, you still cannot get your place at university because it is all settled," she said. The authority, which is the final arbiter of exam grade appeals, heard five appeals last year and allowed three of them says its annual report published yesterday. Two A-level appeals in computing and history were allowed, and one in GCSE history.

The number of appeals against exam grades is growing rapidly but they reach the authority only if students are not satisfied after they have appealed to exam boards.

Authority officials believe it is only a matter of time before a board is sued for damages because a pupil has been denied his or her first choice of university.

Dame Elizabeth said they were still worried about delays by both schools and boards in dealing with complaints, meaning that appeals did not reach the authority until 10 months after the results were published. "The whole process is a marathon that only the most determined schools complete."

This year's report includes details of an appeal from a school which found that its coursework assessments for GCSE business studies had been reduced by nearly 40 per cent. The exam board said the school had been warned previously that it was not assessing coursework correctly. The authority found that the warning had not been clear enough and the appeal was allowed.

The authority may face a shake-up because of the amalgamation of the two bodies in charge of academic and vocational qualifications in the Education Bill which is going through the Commons. At present, it does not hear appeals for vocational exams.

Ministers yesterday announced plans to tighten up the grading of vocational A-levels and cut down bureaucracy.

For further information please return this coupon to: Abbey National Direct, Contents Insurance, Freeport Bradford NEA 453, Bradford, BD1 1BR.

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Telephone: _____ A453B/13

Telephone lines open Monday to Friday 9.00am - 9.00pm and Saturday 9.00am - 4.00pm. To assist us in improving our service we may record or monitor calls. Abbey National, Abbey National Direct and the Umbrella Couple symbol are trademarks of Abbey National plc, Abbey House, Baker Street, London NW1 6XL.

Dig your home contents policy out of the drawer, make yourself comfortable and have a good read. You might find your cover just a little bit limited.

Abbey National's Home Contents Insurance offers an extensive choice of cover with a range of optional extras at competitive prices. What's more we're now offering discounts to give you even better

value. So, why not give yourself total peace of mind, forget the small print, and call 0345 62 62 66 and quote reference A453B/13.

ABBEY NATIONAL DIRECT

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Families have lost £3 a week since the election

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The average council-house family has lost more than £3 a week in net income since the last election, according to the latest calculations from Whitehall.

The figures, in a Department of Social Security *Abstract of Statistics*, belie Treasury propaganda that the average family is £700 a year better off than the last election. Claim and counter-claim about family prosperity is a key battleground for the election as the Tories try to persuade voters they are significantly better off and should not risk Labour ruining that new-found wealth.

Michael Jack, a Treasury minister, said in a written Commons reply: "Real take-home pay for a one-earner family on average earnings was £292 per week in 1991-92, and is expected to rise to £305 per week in 1996-97."

"The 1996-97 income of a family on average earnings is up £700 a year after the effects of tax and inflation when compared with that of 1991-92."

That Treasury reply could contain a number of flaws: the year 1991-92 does not give an accurate definition of the timing of the last election, and average earnings for 1996-97 can only be "expected" because the year does not end until March. However, the *Abstract of Statistics* provides actual figures for average earnings in April 1992, at the time of the last election, and last April. It shows a gross increase of £50.10p per week to £390.20 over the four years of John Major's government.

In real terms, after inflation has been taken into account, the increase is £14.08, or £732.16 a year before tax. After tax that increase is certain to be much less. For a one-earner family with two children living in council housing, with an average weekly pay slip of £390.20, net income last April was £253.28 a week - compared with the real-terms figure of £256.49 in April 1992 - after housing costs had been deducted. That official DSS calculation includes average council-house rent, council tax, income tax, national insurance contributions, and

a full claim for any available benefits. That family was not better off last April than it was at the last election.

On the same basis, a single mother with one child, working on average women's earnings - of £280.70 a week last April - is £4.29 a week worse off, in real terms, after housing costs, than in April 1992. The Government's General Household Survey shows one-fifth of all households live in council or new-town rented housing.

Another 40 per cent of households have mortgages and there is no doubt that many will be considerably better off as a result of mortgage interest rate cuts, which have reduced annual payments on a £33,000 mortgage by about £1,340 a year since the last election. But that bonus has to be offset by the reduction in the rate at which the tax allowance, mortgage interest at source, is paid. Its reduction by the present government from 25 per cent to 15 per cent has cost the average mortgage payer about £500 a year.

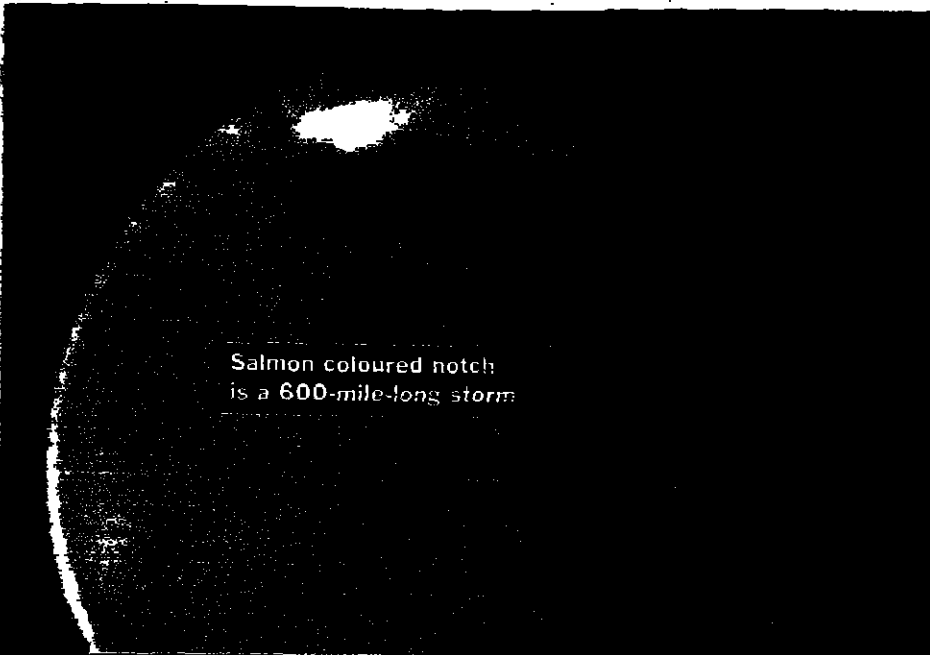
The Conservatives possibly prefer to use 1991-92 as their base line for "feel-good" calculations because there was a significant surge in net income between 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Labour however uses 1992-93 as its base year, possibly because that more than halves the net increase in living standards, from the Tories' £700 to little more than £380 a year for the average family, after pay rises, taxes and prices have been taken into account.

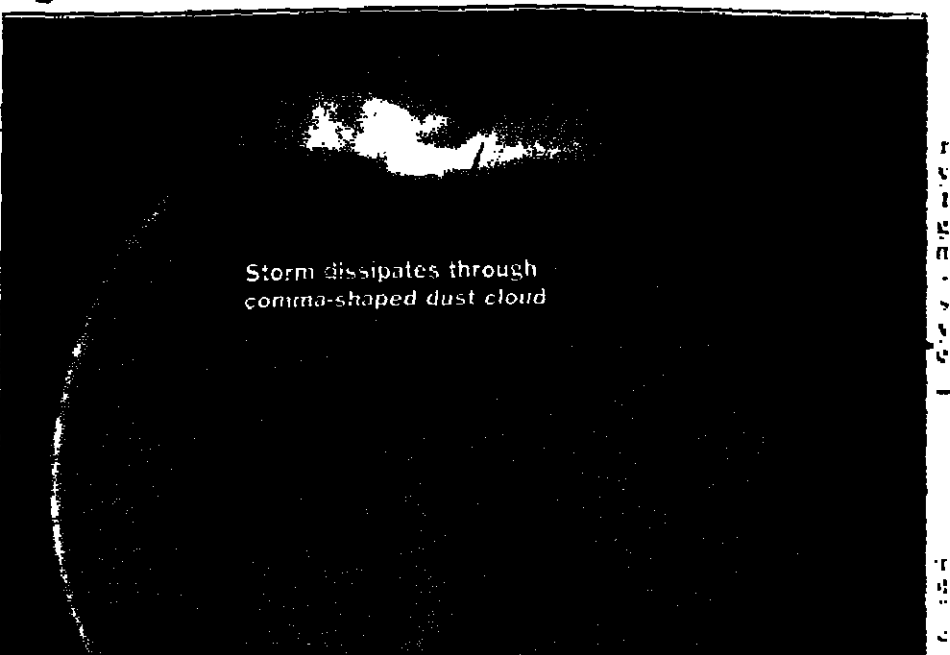
Labour pointed out yesterday that the average family - with one earner on average earnings and two children - was £2.56 a week worse off last year, when compared with 1992-93, after inflation had been taken into account. A Labour spokesman pointed to the Treasury's own figures, showing that that family's net income, after all taxes and benefits, was £296.78p a week in 1995-96 compared with an equivalent in real terms of £299.34 a week in 1992-93.

On that basis, it would appear the average family was worse off whether they lived in rented council housing or whether they had a mortgage.

If there is life on Mars, they're having a rough time



Salmon coloured notch is a 600-mile-long storm



Storm dissipates through comma-shaped dust cloud

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

If there is life on Mars, as British scientists suggested last week, then it must be used to bad weather. New pictures, taken a month apart by the Hubble Space Telescope, show

storms churning the planet's red dust near the north polar cap.

The picture on the left, taken in mid-September, shows a salmon-coloured notch in the white north polar cap: a storm 600 miles long. The bright dust can also be seen over the dark surface surrounding

the cap, where it is caught up in the Martian jet stream and blown east.

The picture on the right, taken in mid-October, shows that the storm has dissipated, though a comma-shaped cloud of dust can be seen curving across the ice cap. The shape is similar to cold fronts on Earth,

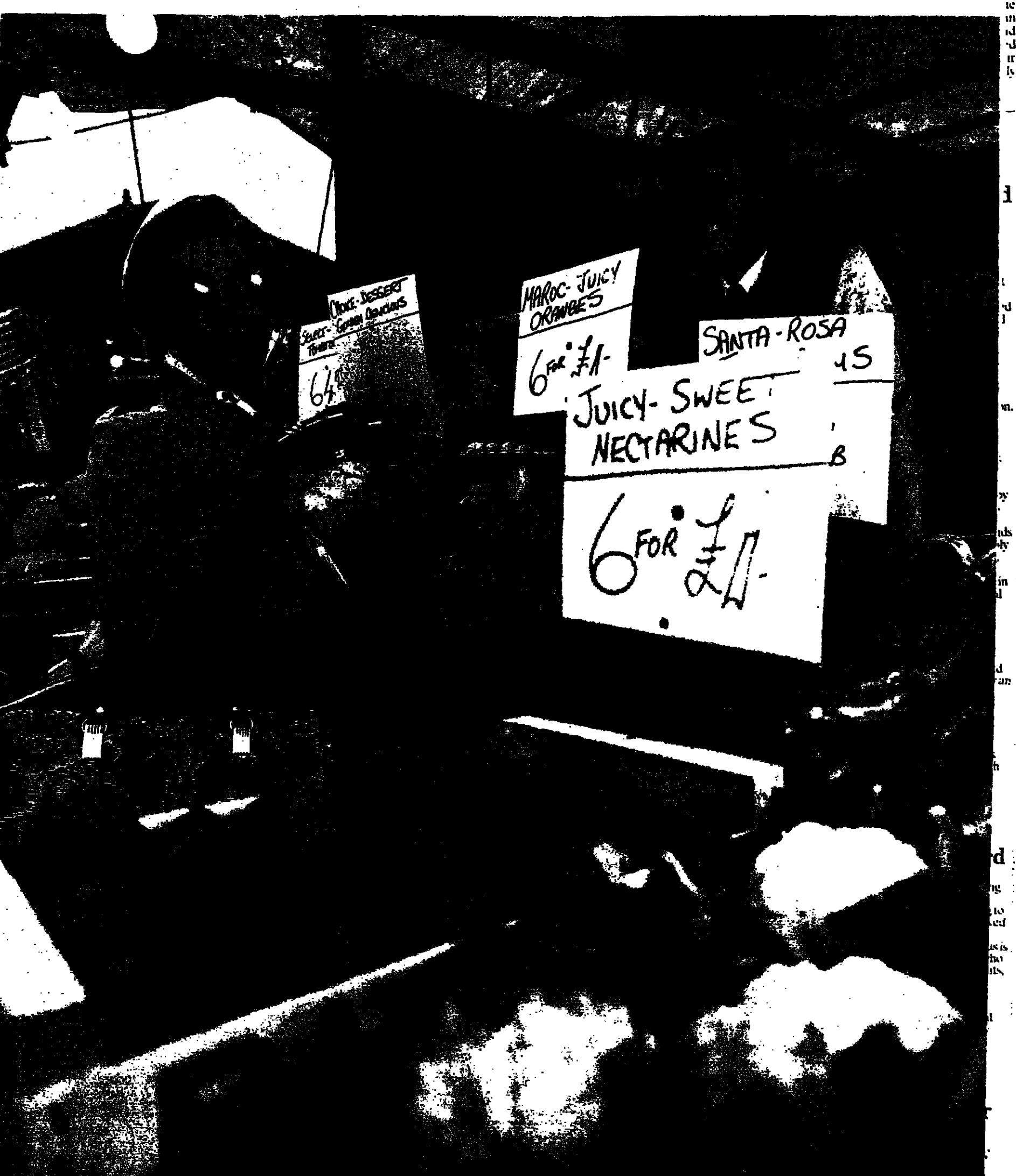
associated with low-pressure systems. But nothing quite like this has been seen on Mars before.

Scientists have thought that life is more likely to be found near the polar regions, which though cooler, have abundant water.

The polar storm is probably

caused by large temperature differences between the polar ice and the dark regions to the south, heated by the springtime sun. The sun also makes the frozen carbon dioxide in the polar cap evaporate.

In the second picture, the cap's edge has receded by about 120 miles.



"Since a friend introduced me to Rukba my life has been much less of a worry"

Rukba is unique among charities for the elderly. Our financial help assists people to stay in their own homes, and we have an 800 strong home visiting volunteer force of helpers. They listen to the problems and offer friendship. If you would like more information about our work, please complete the coupon below or telephone 0345 58 56 80

Please send me more information:
Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Please send to: William Rabbone, Dept IN, Rukba, FREEPOST, 6 Avonmore Road, London W14 8BR

 **Rukba**
Helping elderly people stay independent

The Royal United Kingdom Benefactor Association, Reg. Charity No. 210729

A penny saved!


British Gas
Home
Energy Efficiency Advice

ABBEY NATIONAL DIRECT

Texas, the easiest place on the planet to vote

If I skip the straight-party option, my first vote is for president and vice-president. I can

Spitting image: Masked voters cheer Bob Dole on his California tour Photograph: Reuter

Early voting in person (no need to provide a reason, as in some other states) was available for 17 days at 16 locations in the county, including one drive-through for the physically challenged, where a sign read "Just Honk and We'll Be Out To Serve You"

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe told Western countries which criticised a privatisation deal his government signed with a Malaysian company "to go to hell". The power producer YTL will invest £300m in the privatisation of Hwange Thermal Power Station. *Harare - Reuter*

available via cable and satellite

international

Romania finally turns out old guard

Adrian Bridge
Central Europe Correspondent

Almost seven years after toppling communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Romanians have turned against the former communists who have ruled them since - thereby earning the distinction of being the last country in eastern Europe to do so.

With half the votes counted from Sunday's parliamentary election, the country was yesterday clearly heading for a centre-right government, in what will be the first real transfer of power in Romania since Ceausescu fell in 1989.

In the parallel presidential

vote, the former communist incumbent, Ion Iliescu, emerged narrowly ahead, but fared far worse than expected. He now faces a tough battle in a second round run-off vote against his main rival, Emil Constantinescu, later this month.

As the scale of the former communists' defeat in the parliamentary poll became clear, there was jubilation at the headquarters of Mr Constantinescu's Democratic Convention (CDR), the party now set to lead a governing coalition.

"After seven years of pseudo-democracy and neo-communist rule, the people realised that a total change was needed," declared Lucian Hossu, a leading member of the CDR.

"This is a natural reaction because all the promises turned out to be lies and people's lives became worse and worse."

According to the partial results, the CDR was poised to get some 30 per cent of the vote, well ahead of the 22 per cent registered by Mr Iliescu's Party of Social Democracy (PDSR).

As such, it looked to be well placed to form a government with the third placed centre right Social Democratic Union headed by the pro-reform former Prime Minister Petre Roman.



Ion Iliescu: faces tough battle in second round



People power: Emil Constantinescu, whose Democratic Convention is set to lead a governing coalition in Romania, in the mood to celebrate

Photograph: AFP

Wind of change blows through the east

Last weekend's election results in Bulgaria and Romania suggest the winds of democratic change are blowing with renewed vigour in the former Communist states of central and eastern Europe.

Recent elections in Albania and Bosnia drew heavy criticism from foreign observers for failing to meet acceptable international standards, but the Bulgarian and Romanian polls indicate that peaceful political change achieved by the voters' will is becoming the norm in most parts of the region.

Bulgaria's presidential election produced a convincing victory for the opposition candidate, Petar Stoyanov, over his Socialist (ex-Communist) rival, Ivan Marazov. Although the Socialists have a majority in parliament, where real power

Tony Barber sees a resurgence of democracy throughout the region

resides in Bulgaria, voters sent a clear signal that they did not want the ex-Communists to dominate national politics.

Romania's parliamentary election was the first since the December 1989 revolution to result in a defeat for the remodelled Communists who assumed power after the execution of the Ceausescus. If, as expected, the centrist opposition Democratic Convention forms the core of the next government, it will mark a rare example in 20th-century Romanian history of power being freely and fairly transferred from a ruling party to its rivals.

In those terms, Lithuania's post-Communist progress is

more advanced than that of most countries in the region. Power swung after 1992 elections.

Peaceful political change achieved by the voters' will is becoming the norm in region

tions from the anti-Communist opposition to the reformed Communists, known as the De-

mocratic Labour Party (DLP), but last month two conservative parties inflicted electoral defeat on the DLP.

In 1993 and 1994, ex-Communists returned to power after elections in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, and Poles last year elected Aleksander Kwasniewski, an ex-Communist, as president. Yet the Polish and Hungarian ex-Communists are keen economic reformers, committed to democracy, and determined to join Nato and the European Union.

The left-of-centre tide appeared to be flowing strongly last June, when Czech voters tilted to the opposition Social Democrats and deprived Václav Klaus's centre-right coalition government of its majority. At the time, some commentators regarded the result as the vot-

ers' revenge against Mr Klaus's strict free-market doctrines.

Yet the Czech Prime Minister's policies were often more gradualist than his Thatcherite rhetoric implied. This may explain why it took Czechs until this year to register complaints at the market reforms of the post-Communist age, whereas in Poland, where truly radical changes were thrust on the nation in January 1990, the reaction occurred as early as 1993.

In another election last weekend, Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, and his leftist coalition appeared to coast to victory despite the best efforts of a newly united opposition. Mr Milosevic was helped by coverage on state television that praised him as a Balkan peace-maker and played down the opposition's campaign messages.

same time pledging more support for the needy.

According to the partial results in the presidential poll, Mr Constantinescu looked set to win 28 per cent of the vote, with Mr Iliescu capturing 33 per cent. Neither was seen to have built up a convincing enough level of support to be confident of victory in the second round run-off on 17 November.

Should Mr Iliescu win a fresh term as President, he will almost certainly be forced to "cohabit" with a centre-right government - another first in Romanian politics.

Germany set sights on EU military alliance

Inna Karacs
Bonn

Germany has set its sights on re-vamping the defence structure of Europe, creating a European Union-wide military alliance. The vision, likely to be opposed by Britain and the EU's neutral member-states, was outlined yesterday by the Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel.

Speaking to the daily *Handelsblatt*, he called for an amendment to the Maastricht Treaty to allow the EU's national defence arm, the Western European Union, to be integrated within the organisation. The transition to a fully-fledged "European pillar" within Nato is envisaged in three stages and would be completed in seven to 10 years.

Britain says such a change would undermine Nato, which has served the continent well. Though Bonn also professes to be a keen Nato ally, Mr Kinkel describes strengthening Europe's own security system as "indispensable".

Germany is also proposing at the current round of the Intergovernmental Conference the appointment of a Europe-wide foreign and security supremo, a general secretary who, in Mr Kinkel's words, "will sit in Brussels like a spider in a web".

This person, answerable to the EU's Council of Ministers, would be endowed with wide powers, though not as sweeping as France would like.

Asked if Germany supported French calls for the appointment of a more powerful "EU foreign minister", Mr Kinkel replied: "Europe is not yet ready for that." German caution about this yet-to-be created office stems largely from France's choice for the vacancy: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former French president.

With the EU set to expand in the coming years, Mr Kinkel argues for more centralisation, a strengthening of the hands of the Commission president and the powers of the European par-



Klaus Kinkel: Setting the cat among the pigeons

liament. Such a development would reduce the influence of national parliaments and national sovereignty. The president could be elected by the European parliament, he suggests, and should be allowed more influence in choosing other commissioners, who would be fewer.

For efficiency, Mr Kinkel intends dispensing with the assent of every member state. "We are... at the limit of our possibilities," he said.

"With 20 or more members, the Union will no longer be able to act if it is saddled with the current decision-making process."

Under German proposals, member-states' right of veto would be retained only on security and on certain budgetary matters, whilst other areas would be governed by the qualified-majority principle.

The system Mr Kinkel proposes favours the big states, preventing the minnows from ganging up on the countries Germany thinks have earned their right to lead Europe. Britain, France and Germany combined could see off the rest of the continent. Efficiency also dictates that some states forgo their right for a place in the EU's decision-making organ.

Oxfam Tragedy in Eastern Zaire

It's here: the situation we've been warning the world about for two years has exploded.

Already, one million people are fleeing the fighting. It doesn't matter whether they are Hutu, Tutsi, Zairean, or Rwandan. Starvation, thirst and disease will kill them, even if the bullets don't.

With a million souls seeking safety and shelter, Oxfam urgently needs money to respond to their desperate plight. Your help will save lives.

Give a donation today.

Yes, I want to help Oxfam's work in Eastern Zaire. Here is my donation of:

£25 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ £250 ☐ £

Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms

Address

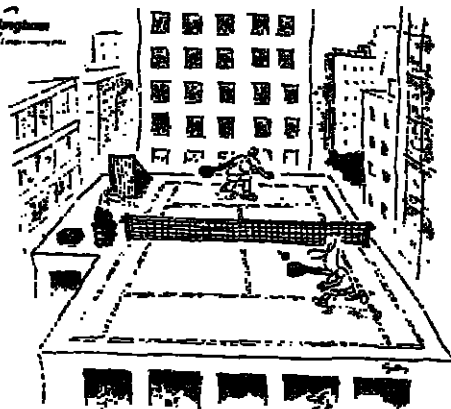
Postcode

Please send to: Oxfam, Room B897, FREEPOST, Oxford OX2 7BR.

credit card donations **01865 312231**

Oxfam United Kingdom and Ireland is a member of Oxfam International.

OXFAM
UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND



You wouldn't hold the world's greatest tennis tournament anywhere but Wimbledon.

Just as the champions always choose to battle it out on Centre Court each year, some of the world's top seeded business players keep returning to the International Convention Centre, Birmingham. Nowhere else would be quite the same.

For them, the superb facilities, outstanding quality of service, value for money and accessibility of the ICC outscore the competition every time.

For your next meeting, convention or conference, make sure you have the advantage. Call today on 0121-200 2000.

The Ultimate Convention Centre
International Convention Centre
Broad Street Birmingham B1 2EA



Renewing your home insurance in November or December?

If you are 50 or over, just see how much you could save with Saga - call us NOW

You will know how expensive home insurance can be. Thankfully, if you are aged 50 or over you can benefit from SAGA Home Insurance - a superior household insurance that is only available to mature, responsible people like you.

SAGA Home Insurance can offer you genuine savings over other policies, while giving you cover that fully protects your home and possessions.

The Saga Price Promise
If you find another comparable policy at a lower price within 2 months of taking out SAGA Home Insurance, we will refund you the difference.

SAGA
Services Ltd

Saga Services Ltd, FREEPOST 731

Middleburg Square, Folkestone CT20 1AZ

Saga Services Ltd would like to send you information about services provided by other Saga companies and may pass details to these companies to enable them to do so.

And why not ask us about our competitive MOTOR INSURANCE



- Insurance cover is comprehensive and low cost
- Discounts for home security
- Free pen with your quotation

Call us today

For your free no obligation quote simply call us on the number below. We will be pleased to answer any questions you have on SAGA Home Insurance.

0800 414 525
ref.IDN601

Lines open Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm, Saturdays 9am - 1pm

£5 off

entry to Europe's biggest and best independent Mac event for business and home users.

Entry without this advertisement is £15.00

Apple

xpo 1996
6-9 November, Olympia London

MacUser

Open 10.00am - 6.00pm on 6th, 7th and 8th November and 10.00am - 4.30pm on 9th November.

Children under 16 will be admitted on Saturday 9th only, two children per adult.

Entry for children is free.

<http://apple-xpo.com/apple>

Apple Expo is organized by EMAP Consulting Ltd, part of EMAP Business Communications. Apple Expo is an independent exhibition not affiliated with the Apple Computer Group of companies. Apple is a registered trademark of Apple Computer, Inc. The Apple Expo logo is copyright of Apple Computer Inc, January 1996.

سكايا من الامم

'I am here until they carry me out,' said the American hotelier fighting the Moscow mafia. This week, they did

Paul Tatum foresaw his death. Last year, just before his luxurious hotel in Moscow was to play host to President Clinton, he produced a publicity booklet detailing a fierce dispute with his business partners. Across the front, in red Cyrillic letters, he printed: "Certificate of Death".

He knew that creating a stir as an American entrepreneur in a mafia-plagued and violent city was risky. But he carried on wrangling over the Radisson-Slavanskaya hotel, the fashionable haunt of foreign dignitaries and Russian busi-

nessmen, and the Moscow headquarters of the FBI.

Until this week, Tatum was a few hundred yards from the riverside hotel, detectives were examining a blood-spattered area where Mr Tatum was shot in the back 11 times by a man with a Kalashnikov.

The 41-year-old businessman, a staunch Republican from Oklahoma City, once described post-Communist Russia as an "entrepreneur's haven".

The establishment - the first American-led joint venture hotel to the Soviet Union - opened with great fanfare in July 1991, after H R Haldeman, Richard Nixon's chief-of-staff, helped him attract the support of the Radisson hotel chain.

At the time, it was cited by many, including George Bush, as a shining example of the brave new world of US-Russian commercial cooperation. It turned out to be the opposite.

The ensuing years were consumed by a murky and byzantine conflict over control of the £30m hotel and business centre.

This erupted last year, when Mr Tatum's former Russian partners locked him out of his offices in the hotel and sealed it off. Mr Tatum, who had earlier tried to oust his rivals, responded in a characteristically flamboyant fashion by donning a bullet-proof vest and breaking

back in, using an electric drill. When he was again evicted, he came back, this time to barricade himself inside his hotel room, with 25 armed guards. He carried on fighting, even after one of them was stabbed in a lavatory. Acknowledging that his life was at risk, he told *The Independent*: "I am here until they carry me out."

The details of the dispute are complex, but their roots lie in a battle for control over the

venture involving the Radisson, Mr Tate, and the city of Moscow. Radisson Hotels yesterday issued a statement calling Mr Tatum a "courageous entrepreneur", while noting that Radisson was in the process of dissolving its partnership with him through the US and Russian courts.

But he was also at loggerheads with the Moscow authorities. In September, he bought a full-page newspaper

advertisement for an open letter to the mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, warning of the "dangerous activities" overshadowing international investment in Russia. Russian businessmen are gunned down almost daily but the shooting of foreigners is rare. The American Chamber of Commerce in Moscow said the killing marked a watershed. "This message is going to be picked up in the boardrooms back in the States," it added.



A fighter: Paul Tatum made his own 'death certificate'.

mans set
ghts on
military
lliance



Man: Khatel: Setting it among the pigeons



Fire power: A Taliban gunman recoils as he is engulfed by his gun's blast during fighting yesterday outside the Afghan capital, Kabul. The Islamic group was attacking the positions of General Masoud and General Dostum, who are holding high ground north of the capital. Photograph: Santiago Lyon/AP

Rifkind seeks security pact for Middle East

Christopher Ballamy
Defence Correspondent

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, yesterday proposed a security organisation which would include the entire Middle East region, going far beyond the current Arab-Israeli peace process to embrace Turkey, Iran and eventually Iraq.

The organisation would be comparable to the OSCE, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Mr Rifkind suggested that the new organisation might be called OCME, the Organisation for Cooperation in the Middle East.

Speaking at the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi, Mr Rifkind said: "What is lacking at present is an overall structure to encourage co-operation between all the countries of the region, with the help and participation of friends outside, like Britain, France, the US and others - a structure which is comprehensive in its membership and

wide-ranging in its functions." British sources said the boundaries of such a regional security forum had not yet been defined, but that Russia, as a state with strong political, military and technological links with the region would almost certainly be one of the "others".

Mr Rifkind has been keen to launch the idea of an OCME for some time, and his proposals have been circulated in France and the US. Both Israelis and Arabs see him as influential in the Middle East but Mr Rifkind has been keen to widen the debate beyond the immediate Arab-Israeli focus of the middle east peace process.

The OSCE, which currently comprises 34 states including the US, Canada and Russia, emerged as a useful means of establishing contact between the two former military blocs in Europe - Nato and the Warsaw Pact. The absence of comparable organisations in Africa and the Middle East is seen as a disadvantage.

Britain believes that an

OCME would be a useful forum for resolving strategic issues such as the supply of water - a potential cause of conflict between Turkey, which is a Nato country, Syria and Iraq. British officials also argue that, although the present Iraqi regime would be excluded from an OCME, it would offer a forum into which Iraq could, eventually, be integrated.

"Such an organisation would evolve rather than spring into existence," Mr Rifkind said. "An OCME would be open in principle to all in the region to participate. This would include a country like Turkey, intimately linked but not part of any regional bodies, of course without prejudice to its relations with the West. I would expect in due course countries like Iraq and Iran to find their place in the OCME, once circumstances permit."

Mr Rifkind said that one natural function for the new organisation would be to support and build on the results of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The Style - The Value - The Catalogue
Yours Free From
JAMES MEADE LIMITED

INTRODUCTORY OFFER

Our 32 page *Women's Classics* catalogue is packed with items of clothing that are superior in quality, value and style. We use the finest fabrics and workmanship the world can offer and our attention to detail is impeccable.

Because we deal direct we keep our overheads low, passing the benefit on to you in the form of affordable prices. To make the value even better, as a special introductory offer, I have deducted 10% from the current catalogue prices.

Featured here are some of the many items contained in our *Women's Classics* catalogue. The traditional 'golfer' cardigan made from the finest two-ply Scottish Cashmere

is absolutely not to be missed. Shown with a stunning wrap skirt in Liberty pure wool challis, it is one of the many co-ordinated outfits on offer to you.

The stylish, patchwork print dress in rich colours is extremely elegant and flattering to wear. Also in warm colours, is our pure wool jersey. It features an original poppy design on the front and back and the intricate stitch-work throughout is just one example of the attention to detail on which we insist.

There is a wide choice. Whether it be shirts, skirts, trousers, jackets, nightwear or knitwear that you are looking for, it is all here in *Women's Classics*.

We are committed to providing you with the best the world can offer at outstanding prices. Every item is backed by our guarantee of your satisfaction. Don't delay, order your FREE catalogue today to take advantage of our introductory offer.

Simply complete this coupon and send it to: James Meade Limited, FREEPOST (SN 1676), Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3BR and we will send you your FREE copy of *Women's Classics*. Or telephone us on 01264 333222 quoting reference no. BWINSQ, or fax this coupon to us on 01264 363200 - do it today to take advantage of our special introductory offer.

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Tel No _____

If you do not wish to receive direct mail from other carefully selected companies, please let us know.

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT. Midland's mortgages are subject to security and status. A charge will be taken over the property and appropriate life policies. The following example illustrates monthly repayments for a typical capital-repayment fixed-rate mortgage of £40,000 over 25 years with interest fixed at 7.99% until 30/11/2001. Thereafter, interest is charged at our variable rate. Estimated costs and fees are based on a valuation or purchase price of £50,000 and include an estimated valuation fee of £110 although this may vary according to the property's value. A £250 booking fee is payable when the application is agreed in principle. Booking fee is refunded for first-time buyers only on draw-down. In addition to figures quoted below, premiums for the required mortgage protection policy are payable: 63 net monthly payments of £281.61 followed by 237 net monthly payments of £284.36. Total gross amount payable £37,597.49 (APR 7.8%). All APRs variable. For a written quotation, call 0800 494 999. All calls are recorded and monitored. Midland Bank plc is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and only advises on its own life assurance, pensions and unit trusts. Denise and Geoff are fictional characters but their story is based on real Midland customers. BJH/8

Meet Denise and Geoff.

Denise and Geoff have just fixed their mortgage at 7.99% (7.8% APR) until the year 2001.

Denise and Geoff are starting a family, so they'd like to take as few risks with their finances as possible. Interest rates are low at the moment, but Denise and Geoff - particularly Denise - aren't counting on them staying that way. So they've fixed their repayments until the year 2001 with a mortgage from Midland Bank. You can do the same by calling 0800 494 999 between 9am and 8pm from Monday to Friday or by meeting a mortgage specialist at any Midland branch.

Midland
The Listening Bank
Member HSBC Group

They called 0800 494 999 for a quote.

Pick up the phone, or visit a branch.

50 off

Europe's biggest and most instant Mac event

Apple

xpo

international

Decline and fall of the men who tyrannised Africa

Grisly ex-dictator dies aged 75

James Roberts

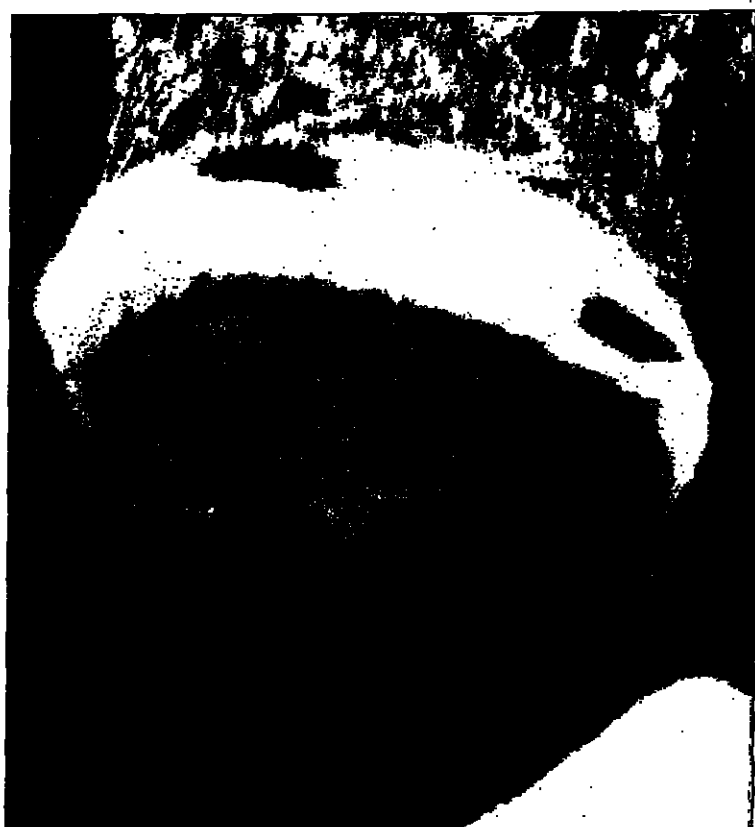
Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who in the 1970s did as much for Africa's image in the world as Hitler did for Germany's, has died of a heart attack aged 75. Yesterday thousands of mourners gathered outside the main hospital in the Central African Republic capital of Bangui to pay their last respects to a man who not only slaughtered his opponents but ate them too.

Raised by French missionaries after his father was murdered and his mother committed suicide, the cannibal emperor was something of a Francophile. He joined the French army at 18, was decorated for bravery, and chose Napoleon Bonaparte as a role model.

He seized power in 1966. In the 1970s Bokassa embarrassed the then French president, Giscard d'Estaing, by saying he had given him diamonds. Giscard said he sold the diamonds and gave the proceeds to charity but the affair tainted his image at home and possibly contributed to his defeat in the presidential election of 1981.

Bokassa lived in exile in France and Ivory Coast after his overthrow but returned in 1986 and was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted and he was released in September 1993.

Obituary, page 16



Mobutu leaves Swiss hide-out

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

The Zairean dictator, General Mobutu Sese Seko, pictured left, arrived in Nice yesterday after hours of speculation about whether he would leave Switzerland, where he has been recovering from an operation, and if he did, whether he would be allowed into France.

Although Mr Mobutu, who is 66, owns a villa on the Riviera near Monaco and a flat in Paris, he has, in effect, been *persona non grata* in France since 1994, though there have been clues this year that he has mended his relationship with President Chirac.

He was said to have looked tired when he left his hotel for Geneva airport. Hotel staff made a point of saying that he settled the bill before he left.

The Zairean leader, who is 66 and has been in power for 31 years, had been in Switzerland since August, where he was being treated for cancer of the prostate.

He had been operated on at the Lausanne University hospital but it is believed that he has stayed on in Switzerland because it was diplomatically convenient. If he returns to Zaire he faces severe difficulties in restoring order to the country.

French seeking summit on Zaire

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

In its first official response to the crisis in central Africa, France yesterday proposed an emergency international conference to discuss reinforcement of security "north and south of Kivu" in eastern Zaire.

The Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, said France wanted all its European and African "partners" to be represented, and the US and Canada. Any operation agreed would entail the dispatch of troops.

The proposal appeared to be a response to pressure from groups in France, including charities like Médecins sans Frontières, that Paris should not stand by as a region closely associated with French influence descended into chaos.

Mr de Charette made clear that in its urgency and the specific nature of the agenda, the meeting superseded, but did not replace, the conference on the region proposed last week by President Jacques Chirac.

But it also suggested an effort by France not to repeat past errors. Insistence that as many countries as possible should take part suggested concern that it should not seem to be acting unilaterally or trying to protect its own interests in a region where Francophone and Anglophone interests have long been in competition.

Since the crisis escalated last week, France has been cautious in its official statements. Partly, it may have been trying to lay to rest the mixed diplomatic reaction to Mr Chirac's recent outburst in Israel. Mostly, however, French reticence is explained by its experience two years ago and the shadow of Operation Turquoise.

This was a military and aid operation, launched under French auspices from Zaire, to support Hutu rebels in Rwanda - and pre-empt a return to power by the more Anglophone-inclined Tutsis.

Widely seen as having precipitated the mass killing of Tutsis and set off the refugee crisis which now threatens to explode, it earned France international opprobrium.

This time, France has been distinguished by reluctance to do or say anything until someone else has given a lead, and by its determination that any action should be organised and conducted with others.

Media comment has referred in breath-taking fashion to the events of two years ago as a foreign-policy error that did lasting damage.

And when the death of Jean-Bedel Bokassa, former ruler of the Central African Republic, was announced this morning, it was this discredited relic of French Africa policy, and not the emergency on the Rwanda-Zaire border, that led national news bulletins.

France's decision to involve the US and Canada also suggests a desire to bury the hatchet with Washington over Africa policy. Last month France and the US engaged in sniping dur-

ing an Africa tour by the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. France took umbrage at criticism by him of countries that saw themselves as having "reserved zones" in the continent, and the US objected to the Secretary of State's tour, his first in four years, being seen by France as an election ploy.

The specific nature of the French proposal - to discuss "enforcing security to the north and south of Kivu on a temporary basis by appropriate means" - is also significant.

Partly, it marks a recognition that order has to be brought to the area, if necessary by force, before there is any chance of a humanitarian aid operation being effective.



Hervé de Charette: Wants US involvement at talks

The focus on this region of Zaire, where the border has been breached, also implies France is keen to prevent any redrawing of the frontier - a solution favoured by some in Rwanda - and so to defend not only Zaire's territorial integrity but also the dignity of its current (and absent) leader, President Mobutu Sese Seko. Until yesterday he was in Switzerland, where he was variously reported to be living it up at Lausanne nightspots or to be at death's door from prostate cancer that had spread.

Mr Mobutu, *persona non grata* in France since the massacres in Rwanda two years ago, made a "private" visit to Paris in April and met Mr Chirac. His arrival late yesterday on the Côte d'Azur, where he has a villa, came amid concern about the effect of his lengthy absence on the stability of Zaire but it also suggested that some deal had been done with France, although there was no hint of what it might be.

yet.another.vital.business.tool.from://bt

The Internet: the essential tool for arming your business. It's a 24 hour means of communicating directly with customers and suppliers, exchanging information, and promoting your company across the world. The most successful companies already appreciate its benefits. Linking to the Internet with BT can help you consolidate existing partnerships - and chase after new ones. You can access information about

competitors, market conditions, the weather in Botswana: you name it. BT can help you every step of the way, from accessing e-mail to creating a presence for your company on the Internet. For a free guide or more information on how the Internet can give your business a competitive edge, call BT Businessconnections on Freestone 0800 800 800 or at <http://www.bt.com>.

Freefone 0800 800 800

INTERNET

Freefone 0800 800 855 e-mail: worksmart@wings.1.agwbt.co.ukWork smarter
not just harder

BT

WATERPROOF
WINDPROOF
BREATHABLEALL-WEATHER
CLOTHING AT

HOUSE OF FRASER

صديقا من الامم

Conjuring tricks and pre-election treats

It seems such a straightforward political choice: money for tax cuts or for an underfunded NHS. With hospital trusts likely to go £300m into the red this year, the clamour for more health spending has begun. But Ken Clarke is resisting, insisting that spending must be squeezed – presumably to pay for pre-election tax cuts instead.

To be true to historical form, Labour should now be leaping up and down demanding more spending on the health service. The choice in the election would then be clear: vote Labour for higher taxes, doctors, nurses and hospital beds; vote Conservative for money in your pocket.

But it isn't as simple as that. For a start, Labour is not playing ball. There is indeed an immediate choice to be made between £300m to make up the hospitals' shortfall, and £300m towards cutting inheritance tax (for example). But proper health care versus tax cuts is not the most important trade-off – either in the Budget, the general election, or the next five years. Nor is there a long-term crisis in health spending. Contrary to expectations, the health service has not been seriously squeezed during 17 years of Conservative government. Today we spend a higher proportion of our national income on health than we did in 1979.

And there is no good reason why health's share of the national cake should be rising any faster. We are a healthy nation. If, as we get richer, we want to spend more as individuals on our health then we should put the money into healthy food and exercise – a far more cost-effective way of improving health than shortening waiting lists.

This year a specific problem has emerged. The health budget hardly increased, compared to the increases in previous years. Yet demands on hospitals continue to rise, with the growing elderly population and an unexplained increase in accident and emergency attendance. No wonder then that the hospitals are in trouble. The Government would be wrong to use tax cuts as a reason to avoid bailing them out. But £300m isn't going to bust the bank. It makes up less than one per cent of spending on the NHS, and is nothing in comparison with the billions needed for significant tax cuts.

If Kenneth Clarke is planning a substantial Budget giveaway – cutting the basic rate to 20p for example – then the hospital trust shortfall will be small change in comparison. If he can find that kind of cut in spending somewhere else (or that level of figure fiddling) then there seems little reason why he shouldn't fit in another pre-

election health spending bribe as well.

The more serious risk is that the Government will be so determined to produce substantial tax cuts that it will deny resources to other areas that badly need it. Education, rather than health care, is the area that really requires more investment over the next decade, whether we pay for it publicly or privately. Improving the quality of schooling, giving children with difficulties the attention they need, delivering books and computers to the classroom, and recruiting and motivating top quality teachers

all costs money. The Liberal Democrats make a plausible case when they argue that taxes should actually go up to pay for better education. Whatever happens, taxes certainly should not be cut when the extra cash can go on education instead.

Nor should the Government pretend that tax cuts can be paid for without any painful spending cuts tomorrow. When you have a £300bn budget to play with, a few conjuring tricks here and there are quite sufficient to bamboozle everyone for a few months. Burying a funding shortfall somewhere in the public sector

pay bill is one popular tactic; so is slashing capital spending. But those games cannot be played for long.

It would be dishonest for the Government to promise huge tax cuts when the nation cannot really afford it. If Kenneth Clarke announces in his Budget next month that the basic rate is going to be cut to 20p, then the next government, whatever its political hue, will have to find a way of raising taxes again or cutting spending to make ends meet – just as it did after the 1992 election. There seem to be hints around in the political back-alley which suggest the Tories may be about to pull the same deception they pulled on voters in 1992: portraying themselves as the party of tax cuts in contrast to Labour tax rises, when in fact they know that the cuts must be paid for by someone, somehow, somewhere.

Labour – in its determination to make sure the Conservatives can't repeat the trick – risks its own dishonesty. Eager not to be portrayed as the high-spend, high-tax party, it risks endorsing the idea that tax cuts are painless. Reducing tax for the poorly paid is an admirable aim, not least because it could encourage employment. But in the short term tax cuts at the bottom end will need to be paid for by tax increases at the top, or by identified cuts in public spending.

As our nation gets richer, and our economy grows, there is more money for governments to play with. But there are new demands, too. Taxing and spending decisions, especially in the short term, are trade-offs. Voters are often wiser than politicians think: they will not forget that they were treated, then tricked, last time around.

Travels with my prejudices

British tourists are ranging further afield, says the Association of British Travel Agents. "Exotic" destinations (like Mexico? exotic?) are in. It would be gratifying if this signalled a revival in the spirit of adventure and exploration. In fact it is about simple pricing: skiing in North America has become a lot cheaper than Switzerland; the Caribbean now competes with Cyprus.

Will greater distance broaden the nation's horizons? Not likely. It's hard to argue that package travel broadens the mind. After all, we haven't become conspicuously more European through taking holidays in France and Spain. People returned from the Med with their skin brownier, their hair paler, and their prejudices very firmly intact.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The best way to handle a wife-beater

Sir: The selection of Paul Gascoigne for the England team and the controversy it has aroused crystallises some of the most pressing questions facing our society ("England's women expect a wife-beater to stay in decent obscurity", 2 November).

Glen Hoddle's decision to give Gascoigne another chance – a chance to establish a good character in conjunction with his accepting counselling to help him overcome his problems – is a most refreshing and much needed injection of compassion and understanding into public life. And it is still one that refuses to condone the player's violent behaviour off the field.

Hoddle has made a point of saying that he hopes his inclusion of Gascoigne will help the man overcome his problems. As such, his attitude contrasts sharply with the many who can see no further than making outraged condemnations.

Some of Glen Hoddle's critics have warned of the danger of Gascoigne becoming a role model and thus reinforcing the behaviour of men who beat women. Perhaps, though, he might become a role model for those whose behaviour is unacceptable but who recognise that they have a problem and seek help.

Hoddle's emphasis on inclusion also makes a telling juxtaposition with the word "exclusion", which we have heard used so frequently in relation to unruly pupils. While their behaviour is absolutely unacceptable, simply excluding these children from school will not bring them the understanding and expert help they undoubtedly need. **TERESA BELTON**
Northolt

Sir: Who says athletes or any other public figures are, or should be, role models? Sports may want to play like Gascoigne, but how many really want to be like him in every respect?

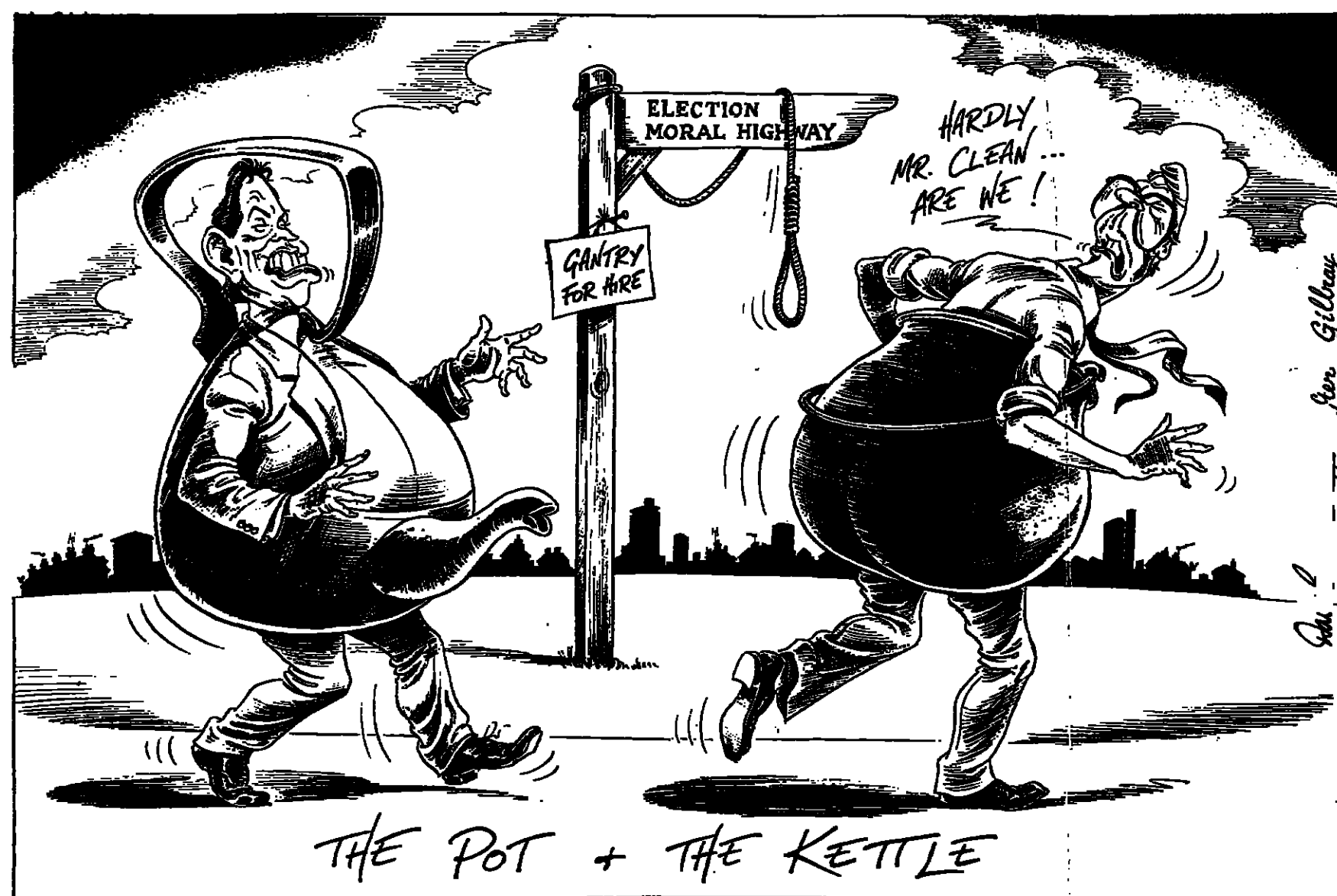
Talk of role models encourages the adoration of celebrities, which is dangerous. As Jesse Jackson frequently points out to black ghetto children in America, where sports, especially, are seen as a way to escape poverty. Only a pitiful handful succeed.

A loving parent, a dedicated teacher or an interested neighbour are better role models than all the heroes and heroines who ever lived. **RONALD ODGERS**
Carlton, North Yorkshire

Sir: Soccer is something I don't understand, but will it be worth protesting should there be any future printing of books by H.G. Wells, not to mention the staging of plays by Dylan Thomas, as it is alleged they were horrid to their wives? Perhaps we should also stay away from our further productions of Shakespeare's Henry VIII. **ROBERT VINCENT**
Andover, Hampshire

Media studies maligned

Sir: The condemnation of media studies courses as a whole in Lucy Hodges' article ("The trendy trainees", 31 October) is reminiscent of the condemnation of the rise of English and Modern History by Oxbridge classicists of a hundred years ago – fashionable, a passing phase, a poor training of



the mind, etc. It is another manifestation of what amounts to a campaign in the media against the study of their own institutions and products and against the acquisition of skills that seemingly are unworthy of being taught and are in little demand.

This knee-jerk reaction to rapidly growing subject areas in higher education involves assumptions about trendiness and soft options without really asking questions about why subjects grow.

Such growth can have nothing, apparently, to do with the development of new and challenging ideas which seem highly relevant to modern post-industrial societies, and nothing to do with the expansion of media-related job opportunities in those societies. Universities are accused of "cashing in" on the trend, and there seems no recognition of the alternative view that they are responding to demand from applicants.

None of us in the field can be complacent about the failure of some graduates to get jobs, and media studies has no doubt its dotter fringe and some less than excellent courses, but Ms Hodges seems to think it would be better if unemployed media graduates had joined the very much larger numbers of unemployed graduates of engineering, sociology and business studies. **DAVID FADDY**
Head of School of Communication University of Westminster Harrow, Middlesex

Sir: How disappointing that *The Independent* should jump on the bandwagon of attacking "trendy" university degrees such as Media Studies, especially when American Schools of Journalism have been

pouring out eminent journalists for decades. Will we never learn?

You have failed to realise the changing nature of media courses over the last 10 years. Here at Huddersfield, as in many universities, our media teaching is predominantly practical, aimed at equipping students with multi-skills for the new bi-media era and with a high investment in technology. **STEPHEN KELLY**
Teaching Fellow in Media University of Huddersfield

Sir: Six unsupported generalisations in two sentences (leading article, 31 October). Not to worry, *Independent*: such sloppy writing would keep you safe from a place on our degree course. **Dr MAIRE M DAVIES**
Director of Studies, BA Media & Cultural Studies London College of Printing London EC1

Windfall unity

Sir: Your Business Comment (1 November) announces "Blair and Brown fall out over windfall gains". In fact Blair, Brown and the whole Labour Party are united in their commitment to a one-off windfall levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities which will pay, over the course of a Parliament, for our carefully costed new deal for young people and the long-term unemployed. **ALASTAIR CAMPBELL**
Press Secretary to Tony Blair London SW1

British fog over Ireland's past

Sir: Roman Bennett's article on the film *Michael Collins* states that "audiences in the US are sadly unable to follow the British lead of dispassionate inquiry and analysis when it comes to Ireland".

After years of debate with Irish, British and other European nationals, it is my view that in general the British are anything but capable of dispassionate inquiry and analysis when it comes to Ireland. Unfortunately, the traditional teaching of history in the UK has left us with a poor sense of our general involvement in the affairs of other countries as a colonial power. Were the British generally more capable of dispassionate inquiry and analysis, one could only hope that the situation in Northern Ireland could have been resolved sooner. **MICHAEL D SMITH**
London SE13

The day I hit a schoolboy

Sir: Have we lost our sense of proportion on smacking children ("Carey happy to give a gentle smack", 26 October, letter 28 October)? I taught chemistry in a Cambridge boys' school during the war, and I had to teach 30 boys in a lab designed for 20. During one practical class a boy deliberately put a piece of sodium on to a wire spoon and held it

under the water tap. There was, of course, an explosion. I walked up to the culprit and slapped him on the cheek. I had no further trouble with that difficult class. I am still convinced that I did the right thing. **BARBARA DAINTON**
(Lady Dainton) Oxford

Sir: So David Shaw thinks that respect for teachers is earned merely by the wearing of a smart "uniform" (report, 4 November). Gillian Shephard wants to reintroduce beating and John Major wants schools to indoctrinate children to an authoritarian "moral" agenda. Why don't we solve the problems of education by sending all our children to a Chinese prison? **TOM HARDY**
Tolworth Girls' School Surbiton, Surrey

Divinely wrong

Sir: It is hardly surprising that John Major's election in 1992 was considered unimportant by the American news media (letter, 1 November). Many, probably most, Americans believe the Queen governs Britain. Only last year a columnist in the *Washington Post* told that paper's readers that government in Britain is based on "the divine right of kings" and offered a quotation from James I in 1607 to prove it. **GEOFFREY PERRET**
Beverly, Humberide

Give us health figures straight

Sir: Jack O'Sullivan ("Is the NHS safe under Mr Blair's team?", 30 October) is right to suggest that Labour is as short as ever on fresh ideas. But journalists and other commentators repeatedly let the politicians off two hooks.

Firstly, they conspire in using a monetary language which the politicians are only too happy to use to confuse the public: continual reference to the percentage of GDP spent on the NHS.

It is clearer and more relevant to ask whether total health care expenditure per person per year in the UK (1993 figures from OECD health data) at £728 is about right, too much or too little compared with Germany (£1,447), France (£1,335), Canada (£1,218), Portugal (£395) and Greece (£252).

However, that is not the only hook. Your journalists and correspondents (Stephen Pollard, letter 2 November) too readily let the politicians off with phrases such as "... to increase funding of the NHS ..." will simply not be possible beyond what John Major has already pledged since it will require tax increases. That neatly constrains and curtails the argument.

Let us open the debate in relation to how the tax cake is divided up. Should there be a bigger slice to the NHS and less to defence? That is the debate we should be having – and it would be less confusing if your commentators used language understood by all of us. **Dr G DE LACEY**
Consultant Radiologist, Northwick Park Hospital Harrow, Middlesex

Sanctions needed against Nigeria

Sir: The anniversary of the executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni minority rights activists at Nigeria's notorious Port Harcourt prison falls on 10 November. The murders authorised by an illegal military regime caused outrage worldwide. The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria's membership and threatened further sanctions if improvements were not made on human rights. Other countries withdrew diplomatic representation. At long last the world at large was seeing General Abacha and his henchmen for what they are.

Twelve months on and nothing has changed for the largest black nation on earth. Over a hundred million people are still enslaved by a brutal and corrupt cabal and its greed for the nation's vast oil wealth. The prisons hold thousands of political prisoners, most notably president elect Moshood Abiola, whose only crime was to win the 1993 presidential elections, kept in solitary confinement without trial for almost two and a half years.

The Foreign and Commonwealth office believes that "progress is being made". They should listen to prominent Nigerians like Wole Soyinka and Chief Raf Uwechue, who call for an oil embargo, banning of further arms sales and, importantly as Nigeria's military masters have sated away many millions in oil revenues, the freezing of assets held in Swiss and Lebanese bank accounts. It is only measures such as these that will bring an end to this evil regime. **TOM ROBBINS**
Norton Canes, Staffordshire

Good old Richard

Sir: Why should the statue of Richard I, a valiant Crusader King who personified the hopes of medieval Christianity by fighting to reclaim the Holy Land, be removed from Westminster (letter, 4 November)? What is incongruous is the statue of Oliver Cromwell, who forcibly dissolved four parliaments, on one occasion commanding a soldier to remove "that fool's bauble" the Speaker's mace. He established a dictatorial personal rule through a big standing army and a network of spies. **JENNIFER MILLER**
London SW15

Rats to Hanover

Sir: Shame on my native town, Hamburg, for abandoning its Hanseatic spirit and the Beatles' muses ("Four decades on, Hamburg says it has had enough of the Beatles", 2 November). But let your arts news editor, David Lister, be accused of libel by Hanover, it was the pompous corporation plus mayor of Hameln (Hamelin) who had to suffer the Pied Piper's just wrath – and not only according to Robert Browning. **INGEROSE SAYER-HEYD**
Oxford

Lock-free zone

Sir: Further to your correspondence on the crimeless 1950s, the Golden Age extended well into the 1960s. As a student at Exeter University in 1968, I remember the opening of a new women's hall of residence which had no locks on any of its 80 bedrooms. **STEPHEN MAGILL**
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.
(Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk)
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

analysis

As Boris Yeltsin prepares for his heart operation, a small, unelected group wield power: his daughter Tatyana, a ruthless in-fighter rumoured to be her lover, and a clutch of heavyweight businessmen.

By Phil Reeves



Russia's new regency

Russians don't much like women taking part in politics. They occasionally profess admiration for Margaret Thatcher or their own Catherine the Great, but most regard the idea of female rule as about as welcome as a ban on fur hats. Yet that, in part, is what they now have.

As Boris Yeltsin awaits his heart operation, due this week, power has flowed from his enfeebled grasp into the youthful hands of his younger daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko, working with his chief of staff, Anatoly Chubais, and a powerful coterie of businessmen. Less than four months after an election that many in the West hoped would prove that democracy had finally taken root in Russia, unelected members of Moscow's social elite have taken command.

The reaction has been negative. "They [the press] used to attack the president," grumbled Yeltsin's wife, Naina, in a weekend television interview. "Now it is Tatyana who is under fire."

The family had stopped showing her husband the more distress-

ing newspaper articles, she said, for fear they would upset him.

But this does not appear to have daunted the Kremlin's new political double act. In the past four months, Chubais and his camp have secured the dismissal of their most formidable Kremlin opponents. They have appointed two leading business supporters to senior government jobs, consolidated control over two national television channels, and dictated access to the ailing president. Their enemies call them a regency, even their friends admit they rule the roost.

Even before Chubais and Dyachenko emerged on the scene, backed by a small group of influential pro-reform Moscow bankers and media tycoons, there was a strong sense of public betrayal surrounding Yeltsin's second term. Dozens of election promises have been shelved in the months since the president bamboozled and—in some cases—flagrantly bought his way back into the Kremlin.

Ageing and out of touch but for a handful of radio addresses and fleeting glimpses on television, he has become a remote shell of a president, closeted in

a sanatorium after a recurrence of heart trouble in June that his aides initially hushed up, for fear it would wreck his chances in the election's final round. Meanwhile, millions face the onset of winter without pay, benefits, meaningful jobs or even enough food.

But the discovery that the country is under the sway of a highly unpopular Kremlin courtier, the president's daughter, and a clutch of heavyweights from big business has further deepened the public's cynicism. Russia is a male-orientated society, where the age of female liberation has yet to dawn. "No one would ever elect Tatyana," said one leading analyst, "it is just not in the nature of the country. And can you name any woman in high office?" (There is, in fact, one: an obscure health minister.)

At present, Tatyana's role appears principally to be that of a link—a conduit of information and views between the president, his chief of staff Chubais, and the businessmen behind him. But her larger ambitions are the source of considerable speculation. Does

she aspire for power, high elected office, perhaps even eventually the presidency itself? Or is she simply helping to secure her father's position at a time when he is highly vulnerable to the scheming and plotting of those around him?

Some commentators have begun to hint that she is playing a longer game, and offer tentative comparisons with Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, or even Indira Gandhi. According to *Moskovskaya Pravda*, one of Moscow's top political consultancies has been working on her profile, purely experimentally, to see how palatable she would be as a candidate. "Who would have thought half a year ago that this lady now marching through the Kremlin corridors with a radio telephone in her hand would become a real political figure?" remarked the paper.

Most Russians know remarkably little about 36-year-old Tatyana Dyachenko. Details of her personal life, which include a broken marriage to a Soviet-era engineer turned businessman, are scattered and incomplete. She has a 15-year-old son, also called Boris, whom Yeltsin dotes on.

This year Boris junior was enrolled in the £15,000-a-year English public school Millfield, in Somerset, where—intriguingly—Chubais at the same time decided to send his son, Alexei. Tatyana has a second boy, a baby.

For years, she remained behind the scenes, a reserved, stylish-looking woman who was better educated, and better spoken, than her father. She trained as a mathematician and once held a job calculating

rocket trajectories. The fullest picture of her came from Yeltsin's autobiographical writings, including a bizarre account of how Yeltsin let her suckle his nipple when she was a baby. The president makes clear that the women in his family—his wife, Naina, and daughters, Yelena

media powerbrokers, including Boris Berezovsky, who runs a trading and media empire, and Vladimir Gusinsky, head of the Most-Group, coalesced around Chubais. Together, they took control of the task of selling Yeltsin to a sceptical nation. To run the show, they needed a direct line to the president.

the president, she was the only one considered capable of conveying it. And there were occasional flashes of an iron will. "When she said no to something, because the president didn't want it, that was it. It meant no. She had a very powerful veto," said Vyacheslav Nikonov, who worked on the campaign.

Yeltsin's gatekeeper

No one in Russian politics produces such extreme reactions as Anatoly Chubais, the gatekeeper and right-hand man to Boris Yeltsin. The circle of millionaire bankers and businessmen that support him see him as a brilliant economic and political talent, whose presence in the Kremlin will ensure the future of Russia's free-market reforms and the safety of their fortunes. But for many millions of other Russians, he is a charmless lackey of the West who devised a privatisation process in which Russia sold off some of its most treasured assets. Both sides would, however, agree on one point: the 41-year-old ruthless chief of staff has the essential quality to survive in the Kremlin shark pool: ruthlessness. In the past four months, he has routed his most important rivals for power. Even before his appointment in July, he secured the dismissal of his main rival for the ear of the president, Yeltsin's former bodyguard, General Alexander Korzhakov. He was also behind the sacking of General Alexander Lebed.

Ten months ago, Chubais's career seemed to be in sharp decline after Yeltsin sacked him as his privatisation minister as a sop to an anti-reform, anti-Western mood in the country. He has worked his way back to the top with astonishing speed, masterminding Yeltsin's slick election campaign, and winning the post of chief of staff. Since then he has carefully stored up his own power base, sidelining the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin. Through his association with Tatyana Dyachenko, Yeltsin's daughter, Chubais is now the only official with daily access to the president. He controls the Kremlin media operation, decides who sees the president, drafts laws and wields strong influence over at least two national TV channels.

and Tatyana—play a key role in his life. In his book, *The View from the Kremlin*, he called them "the women's council".

In February, Tatyana graduated to the perilous arena of Kremlin politics. The polls suggested that her father was heading for defeat at the hands of the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov. Desperate to keep a supporter of market reforms in the Kremlin (not least because of their own vast commercial interests), a group of millionaire bankers and

They got it, by recruiting his family favourite, Tatyana.

As a member of the campaign's 10-strong analytical team, she acquired a reputation as a quietly efficient operator, with a shrewd sense of politics and presentation. She was acutely conscious of her father's image, rushing in to groom his sweep of silver hair before television appearances, and banning his guards from wearing sunglasses because it made them even more thuggish than usual. When there was bad news for

"The only person whom he [Yeltsin] listened to was his younger daughter, Tatyana," complained Nikolai Yegorov, the president's then chief of staff, in a recent interview. "Perhaps she has brains, but she is only a daughter and not an experienced politician. She has absolutely no experience in this area and for this reason can be easily manipulated."

Yegorov is one of a clutch of ousted Kremlin insiders who have publicly condemned the growing influence of the Tat-

yana-Chubais axis. He is also one of a group of political bruisers whom Chubais (helped by Tatyana) have winked out of the Kremlin in the past four months, most of whom level the same allegation: General Alexander Lebed, the sacked security chief, has talked of their desire to "rule as a duet", and has alleged that Chubais used Tatyana Dyachenko to persuade Yeltsin to fire him.

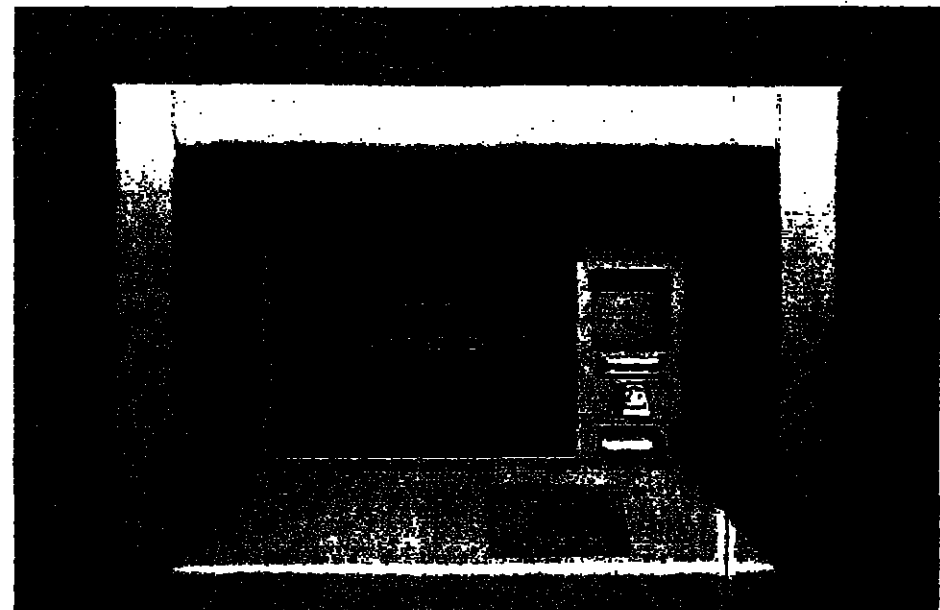
General Alexander Korzhakov, former head of the presidential guard, has accused Chubais of running an "unconstitutional regency", drafting presidential decrees in his own office. Tatyana brings Yeltsin the paperwork. Documents are "all prepared in Chubais's headquarters". The dismissal and alienation of the ex-KGB officer—for years Yeltsin's inseparable friend, trusted adviser, and drinking companion—is one of the most dramatic examples of Dyachenko's influence over her father. It is doubtful that Chubais could have persuaded Yeltsin to sever such a deep bond on his own.

Behind the cut and thrust of politics lies another, more delicate question. Is it true, as wagging tongues in Moscow claim, that the relationship between Chubais, 41, and Tatyana Dyachenko is more than merely professional? Reports of a liaison have been circulating for weeks in Moscow, a city which relishes scandal almost as much as Washington DC. Evidence, however, is in short supply.

In fact, sources say that the president's daughter's closest political associate is Igor Malashenko, president of Russia's commercially run NTV, another member of the campaign team. After the election, Malashenko was offered Chubais's job by Yeltsin, but turned it down. His company has been well rewarded for supporting the Kremlin during and after the elections; it has been allowed more space on the airwaves, is launching a new satellite service, and may even be allowed to buy up the ORT television channel.

But her future political plans overshadow lesser issues. At the moment, she and the Chubais camp hold the cards. They control a huge slice of the national television market—ORT and NTV—and a stack of newspapers. Attention has fixed on them, and not Russia's prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the man to whom power passes, according to the constitution, if Yeltsin is incapacitated. But he has presidential ambitions and plenty of allies in the oil and gas lobby. A rivalry is in the making.

Tatyana Dyachenko must know that the odds in this macho-minded country of a woman—not to mention another Yeltsin—being elected are about as long as they are for a snow-free winter. But she will also remember how Yeltsin has fought back from exile from the Politburo, the scandalous bombardment of the White House, the ludicrous Chechen war, and deep overall unpopularity. Crazy though it seems, she may yet be interested in something more than her father's place in history.



OR spread your insurance

payments over a year.

Interest free.

Call 0800 333 800

for a motor or

home quote.

EAGLE STAR
Direct

Phone for a free quote weekdays 9am-5pm, Saturday 9am-2pm. A written credit quotation is available on request. Motor insurance not available in Northern Ireland. We regret that we cannot quote for rented unfurnished accommodation.

How do we stop these flaming terrorists?



Miles
Kingston

Frantic last-minute talks are being mounted today in order to avert a devastating programme of terrorism planned for this evening all across the British mainland, involving rocket attacks, Chinese mortar assaults and potatoes being dropped in large fires and getting burnt to a cinder.

"It is the same every year," said a harassed Home Office official. "It is the official anniversary of one of the holiest days in the

history of the movement, and they insist on celebrating it. As a result we get a well-orchestrated mass outbreak of explosions and bombs all over Britain. It makes the Apprentice Boys' March look like Blind Man's Buff."

But what is it all for? What is this movement that celebrates such holy days?

"I wish we knew," says the harassed Home Office official. "They never come out and make any demands. They never insist on any reparation. They seem to have no organised head of operations. These demonstrations of violence seem totally uncorrelated, yet they happen with frightening punctuality and regularity. As you probably know, an organisation with no chain of command is a lot harder to penetrate than any other kind. These people make the IRA look like the Boy Scouts."

Where are they based? "I only wish we knew," says what I can only describe as a harassed-looking Home Office official. "They can

cause violence and burning anywhere in the British Isles at will. Our fire brigades are stretched to the limit on 5 November. When the IRA pull off a job, it immobilises that part of town and it monopolises the emergency services in one area. But this Guy Fawkes mob can immobilise the whole bloody country!"

Guy Fawkes? Ah, so you have a name, at least? A lead of some kind?

"That's where they're so bloody clever!" says the Home Office official, swearing for the second time in as many sentences, which is a sure sign of being harassed. "Yes, we thought we had a lead when this name came up but we couldn't find him anywhere on the computer until somebody had the bright idea of looking in the Crimes Unsolved (Historical) file. Then we found him. Catholic terrorist, executed 1605. What use was that to us?"

Were there no leads at all?

"Well, we found a woman

called Antonia Fraser who was a leading member of the modern Catholic establishment and who had written a life of this Fawkes man, so we hauled her in for questioning, but she was no help. She wouldn't say anything except 'Buy the book!' We explained that we had bought the book but couldn't follow all of it and could she please in very simple words say what she thought had happened."

"She said she thought that Guy Fawkes was innocent and had been framed by the secret services, which is what they always say, so we were just going to slap her around a little when her husband arrived, steaming hot, screaming about civil liberties and torture and man's basic inhumanity to man, as if 5 November itself wasn't an outrage, and on a far worse scale! We couldn't get a word in edgeways when they were both at it, so we chucked them out still screaming, him saying he was going to turn it all into a powerful one-act drama about oppression and she

saying she would back him all the way, and even attend the first night if she had to."

So where does that leave the peace process?

"Peace process?" says a very harassed Home Office official. "There is no peace process. There is just a series of last-minute, behind-the-scenes, under-the-table, behind-closed-doors, in-the-nick-of-time desperate talks."

Between whom?

"We don't even know that. That's how secret they are."

Then how do you know they are actually going on?

"We don't," confesses a harassed Home Office official. "I am just saying that to make it seem that something is happening. The truth is that we have no idea what is happening. We shall probably just leave them to get on with it as usual. There will be death and destruction on a grand scale and there is nothing we can do about it."

And that is why you look so harassed?

"No. That is because I work for Michael Howard."

صوتنا من الداخل

Elmer Gantry vs the Brixton boy: the gloves are off

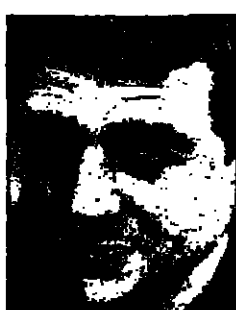
Personal tensions between party leaders are nothing new. Neil Kinnock's dislike of Margaret Thatcher was largely political. But it impeded rather than enhanced his ability to get the better of her. Over Westland he famously failed to land the killer punch.

Kinnock once explained privately that his proper and traditionalist South Wales background inhibited him from attacking a woman, and an older woman at that. But his dislike was probably the reason why, in the confidence debate after she fell in November 1990, he failed sufficiently to exploit the Tories' discomfort by taunting them with the charge that they had sacrificed a leader better than they deserved. Kinnock almost certainly thought at the time – as Blair, interestingly, did not – that they had been right to get rid of her.

Moreover, those who were close to John Smith insist that the especially close personal relationship which he was supposed to enjoy with John Major was a bit of a Tory myth. Smith did see Major privately on several occasions, for example on the unfolding Bosnia crisis, but, it is said, emerged more often bemused than enlightened. Certainly Smith was inclined to make sure that there was an aide listening on an extension when the two leaders spoke on the telephone – as, he assumed, Major was doing, too.

So, what of the Blair-Major relationship? Well, there has certainly been scratchiness over the one issue the two parties were supposed to join forces over: Dunblane. Major has told colleagues he was angry that the Government had agreed to postpone publication of the Cullen report until after the two party conferences. Labour made such an issue of Dunblane at Blackpool, George Robertson, however, is adamant that the agreement applied only to publication of the report – as his letter to Michael Forsyth indicates. There were already resolutions down for the conference, which anyway made it impossible to avoid debating the issue.

But this wasn't all. It now turns out that there was a little retrospective friction – if not between the leaders themselves, then between their two camps – over a short interview Major gave to the BBC outside his hotel the night before he and Blair visited the stricken school in Dunblane. Officials travelling with Major were worried that, since Blair was staying in Dunblane, he might be all over the airwaves before the Prime Minister arrived. It was agreed that neither would go public until the following day. But Major's aides say he was "doorstepped" by the famously dogged Kenny McIntyre, the BBC's Scottish political editor, and did feel he could not speak when a microphone was thrust at him. Labour in the incoherent village that is Westminster, Major and Blair might as well get on as best they can.



Donald Macintyre

Blair is still waiting for an apology after Major suggested on TV that the Labour leader took a free trip on Concorde

ously that Major actually likes Blair.

The truth is more complicated. Blair respects Major's ability to win elections, his survivability, his resilience and personal toughness. But he believes, and will never stop saying when the occasion arises, that Major is a weak leader. Major's "Elmer Gantry" crack – to a Tory MP – is wide of the mark, since the fire and brimstone film evangelist was a lecher and a drunk. But Major does get irritated by what he sometimes sees as Blair's "holier than thou" approach to the moral agenda. Major knows that Blair is a formidable political force. But he may be a little chippy that Blair went to a private school – the same one, ironically, that spawned his own hero, Iain Macleod. And maybe some of this will help him recover an edge in the election.

But he must also surely know that he can't let it all get out of hand. The voters do care about personalities as well as issues. But there is a clear distinction between Blair attacking Major for weak leadership – or, for that matter, Major attacking Blair for being authoritarian – and petty aspersions on the character of your opponent.

Tonight, unless the US sees the biggest upset since Truman beat Dewey, a man routinely accused of serial adultery and taking dodgy foreign party donations will wipe the floor with a war hero with a generation of Senate experience behind him. It's a sobering thought. In the incestuous village that is Westminster, Major and Blair might as well get on as best they can.

ble for, or Blair remotely troubled by, other details such as the relative size of the Government-provided wreaths given to each, or Blair's place in the motorcade.

So is all really sweetness and light? Major irritated Labour by complaining to a TV executive that Blair broke faith over Dunblane. And Blair was annoyed last month by Major's suggestion on BBC TV's *Breakfast with Frost* that he had once been, as a backbencher, on a free Concorde trip to the US, courtesy of Ian Greer. As it happens, the all-party trip had been sanctioned by Margaret Thatcher. Blair's office thought that Major had disassociated himself from similar accusations being pressed by the backbencher David Shaw. They made it clear after the interview that Blair was expecting an apology. And there hasn't been one yet.

This sheds a welcome, if at times bewildering, light on the mechanics of relations between the men at the top. But what does it prove?

The clue to this, perhaps, is in the vigorous attempts yesterday to play down the idea of any serious personal difficulties in their relations. While Tony Blair was protesting that there were no problems in his relationship with Major, a senior Tory – for background, of course – was explaining vigor-

A folk festival to lighten our darkness

by Andrew Brown

Drive down any motorway on an early November night: a river of jewels pours towards you. Above the headlights, rockets soar and hang in the air like spray. If brilliance and colour were the only test of religious art, the M25 in fireworks week would be the largest cathedral in the world. The British have invented an entirely new folk festival: a week of satisfying bangs and flashes which have lost all their historic purposes – except to defy the oncoming winter. They are neither purely Guy Fawkes' night, nor Hallowe'en, nor the pagan festivals which must have preceded both. Instead there is something we might as well call fireworks week: a spontaneous outburst of religious enthusiasm, without any dogma at all.

This new festival is very popular. According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, which is not enthusiastic about the figures, the number of fireworks sold in this country has risen by 22 per cent in the last five years, to 137 million; and this figure excludes both the weakest and the most powerful categories.

Once upon a time the justification for all these explosions was obvious. They were to remind the Catholics of how miserable they deserved to be, and the Protestants of how grateful they should be. In the Anglican Book of Common Prayer there was a special service to remember "Gunpowder Treason", used on November 5 every year.

"We yield thee our unfeigned thanks and praise for the wonderful and mighty deliverance of our gracious sovereign King James the First, the Queen, the Prince, and all the Royal Branches, with the Nobility, Clergy, and Commons of England, then assembled in Parliament, by Popish treachery appointed as sheep to the slaughter, in a most barbarous and savage manner beyond the examples of former ages." Later in the service, God was thanked for bringing us King William III, "for the deliverance of our Church and nation from Popish tyranny and arbitrary power".

Queen Victoria removed all that in 1859; and nowadays the sentiments hardly make sense at all, outside of Northern Ireland and Lewes in Sussex, where they still celebrate Guy Fawkes' night with a figure of the old ritual. But neither does Hallowe'en. In this country the only people who really believe that Hallowe'en has anything to do



Between Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes' night we have fireworks week: a spontaneous outburst of religious enthusiasm without any dogma

with raising spirits are some evangelical Christians, and even they are diminishing their protests as it becomes more about fireworks and less about pumpkins.

Hallowe'en has come to mean the start of the firework season, and Guy Fawkes' night, the end of it. In between lies a passage of celebration and danger which is curiously detached from its moorings.

The danger is important. It seems heartless to say so after

a weekend when fireworks have left eight children fatherless, but without the danger, fireworks would be less satisfyingly dramatic. If the bangs and flashes were not enough to frighten humans, how could they hope to drive away the darkness?

Besides, the firework week of our modern autumn descends from much more barbarous and dangerous practices.

The association of this autumn festival with pain and

suffering is much deeper than might at first appear. There is a tradition of young men leaping through bonfires at seasonal festivals. This can never have been entirely safe; yet according to Fraser's *Golden Bough* it was a weakened form of the original rite, which would have involved human sacrifice. We do know that the Druids burned human beings, along with other animals, alive in wicker cages. Since then, Chris-

tians, too, have been valued for their combustible qualities, first by the Romans, and in the 16th century, by other Christians as well. It is horrible to reflect that the burning of heretics was a form of popular entertainment as well as a religious purging.

Modern celebrations are much purer. Dr Martyn Percy, the chaplain of Christ's College, Cambridge, who has made a special study of charismatic religion, says that fireworks are a powerful religious symbol: "We may be seeing the emergence of a genuine folk-religious festival, in which we frighten off the darkness. In Chinese religion you light fireworks to scare the evil spirits from the sky. That is why the bangs have to be so noisy."

And fireworks can be used as an illustration of all sorts of Christian ideas, he says. "They can illustrate the idea of the Ascension perfectly. They go up into heaven; light spreads over the world; and the original substance disappears."

The link between physical light and spiritual enlightenment seems inescapable. Aldous Huxley, in *The Doors of Perception*, argued that the use of stained glass in cathedrals arose from the need to fill the darkness with coloured lights, because these would tend to transport the soul into a deeper reality. He was, admittedly, writing in praise of the religious use of mescaline. But he drew on a wealth of erudition to argue that there were visions of heaven as a city of many jewels among mystics in all the literate religions of the world; and if his argument explains the use of stained glass in cathedrals, it could also explain the uplifting effect of fireworks on the spirit.

Dr Percy says the firework festival can be seen as part of a wider trend towards celebration in all religions. In charismatic Christianity, he says, it is now common to be invited to "celebrations" that have no liturgical anchor. They are not celebrations of any particular saint or day, but simply of the goodness of being alive.

From the standpoint of traditional religion this can look strange and worrying, but in fact we should celebrate this trend towards pure celebration. Of course it is frightening. In the darkness beneath the bright explosions there is anarchy about. The adults are drunk. The children are scared. The bad spirits to be frightened are still real. But at least they are no longer political: we have ascended from *auto-da-fé* to a pure *feu de joie*.

Education? It's the economy, stupid

Labour's solution to the underclass is misguided, says Robin Marris. Money management is the key

Last week the Chancellor raised interest rates. Only by a token amount, but enough to pass a "message" to the City. Commentators have given diverse explanations for his action. None has given concrete evidence that actual inflation is accelerating dangerously. Gordon Brown, in his contribution to the debate on the Queen's Speech, implied that he did believe there was now a serious danger of inflation, but that this was the fault of the Government for failing to encourage investment.

My explanation is that both the Chancellor and his Shadow are still under the spell of a restrictionist, macro-economic philosophy which effectively discourages investment. One can daily see the results throughout the media. Isn't it odd how City columns so often report good news, bad news? In July last, *The Times* reported, "Output rise may stall rate cut"; in the same month, *The Independent* wrote, "US jobs surge causes Wall Street panic". Only a few weeks ago, again in *The Independent*, we read, "Clarke boom is bad for the stock market".

Think about it. Something that is good for the unemployed and for the economy causes stock market prices to fall and the Bank Governor to clamour for higher interest rates. Either there is something odd about the system, or market operators have an upside-down view of reality. I think it is the latter. Market operators, and the people who write for them, are suffering from irrational expectations. Journalists believe markets think that governments have come to believe that almost any improvement in the real economy is a danger sign for inflation. It is a vicious circle. Whether governments believe the gloomy scenario or not, they are forced, by fear of the markets, to behave as if they did.

There are many arguments about the cause of this situation. After five years of 3 per cent inflation, we had the late-Eighties outbreak, when, though general OECD inflation never rose above 5 per cent, UK inflation stood at 7 per cent for a short time. The painful part of that experience was the violent decline in employment and production when the "hust" came. That was not a normal reaction: it was because the financial system had become unstable due to deregulation and the loans bonanza. So we got all the horrors of unemployment and negative equity.

Some of the instability is still there, and there is reason to be cautious, though exaggerated caution carries heavy costs. In his conference speech, he said that 40 per cent of the population were economically struggling. (I think that is exag-

gerated, but 30 per cent is not far out.) Yet Tony Blair and Gordon Brown said nothing of the relationship between economic growth and job creation. In their comments on the macro-economy, both spoke mainly about inflation.

Instead, they said the solution to the underclass problem is "education, education and more education". But over the period in which the problem has emerged, we have seen a massive increase in the educational level of the working population. To take a single indicator, the proportion of women with no qualifications has

fallen from two-thirds to a third. The corresponding change among men is even stronger.

So what, in the minds of Blair and Brown, has gone wrong? They do not really tell us. They hint that the British education system is still too elitist, but are unhelpful about details or remedies. More fundamentally, they do not face up to this question: if those who have not participated in the education revolution had had better qualifications, would there in fact have been jobs for them? On my calculations, the answer is "no".

Implicit conventional wisdom says otherwise, but gives no argument or calculation. I have a nasty suspicion that part of the reason for the Brown/Blair position lies in two fears. Both are understandable, but no less disturbing for that. The first stems from the realisation that it is

Britain, the US and continental Europe for the past quarter-century. The results take different forms in different countries, but in the UK the features are a stagnation of real earnings among low-earners; a 33 per cent "non-employment" rate among "low-end" men of working age (ie, with no GCSEs); and an extraordinary increase over the past quarter-century in the proportion of all working-age men who are not employed; this has gone up from one in 20 to almost one in four.

This should surely be the priority problem for policymakers. The public certainly thinks so: opinion polls show an overwhelming concern about the emergence of an underclass. Tony Blair also seems to think so. In his conference speech, he said that 40 per cent of the population were economically struggling. (I think that is exag-



Are they too afraid of offending the City? Gordon Brown (left) and Kenneth Clarke

gerated, but 30 per cent is not far out.) Yet Tony Blair and Gordon Brown said nothing of the relationship between economic growth and job creation. In their comments on the macro-economy, both spoke mainly about inflation.

Instead, they said the solution to the underclass problem is "education, education and more education". But over the period in which the problem has emerged, we have seen a massive increase in the educational level of the working population. To take a single indicator, the proportion of women with no qualifications has

fallen from two-thirds to a third. The corresponding change among men is even stronger. So what, in the minds of Blair and Brown, has gone wrong? They do not really tell us. They hint that the British education system is still too elitist, but are unhelpful about details or remedies. More fundamentally, they do not face up to this question: if those who have not participated in the education revolution had had better qualifications, would there in fact have been jobs for them? On my calculations, the answer is "no".

Implicit conventional wisdom says otherwise, but gives no argument or calculation. I have a nasty suspicion that part of the reason for the Brown/Blair position lies in two fears. Both are understandable, but no less disturbing for that. The first stems from the realisation that it is

indeed difficult for governments to increase the sustainable rate of long-term economic growth. The second is fear of "the markets". If these, and similar fears are so real that nothing can be done, I am pessimistic for the underclass. Without macro-economic success, "supply-side" policies, such as more and better education, however intrinsically desirable, will fail to resolve the problem of jobs and low wages.

If that conclusion were true, it would be a poor reflection on the state of the world economy. Fortunately for my own state of mind, I do not myself believe it, because the long-run growth rate of total demand and capacity that the economy is able to sustain without unacceptable inflation (the so-called "sustainable" growth rate) is flexible. It is susceptible to both supply- and demand-side policy influences.

One policy that is required is a sustained effort by all governments to create a permanent reduction in long-term real interest rates (they are still, by historical standards, much too high). Another is simply a matter of business psychology. The business people who produce goods and services need constant reassurance that the basic aim of government policy is real long-term economic growth – not only of productivity per worker, but of total output and total employment.

The real economy needs to be constantly reassured that low inflation is a means to an end, not an end in itself. What Kenneth Clarke did last week gave all the wrong signals, and violated every one of these precepts.

Gordon Brown has shown more awareness of the problem, but his spoken contribution is still bedevilled by the City syndrome. He did not address the problem that high interest rates are themselves a hindrance to investment, and therefore also a barrier to growth. I agree this is a chicken-and-egg problem, but at least it must be recognised.

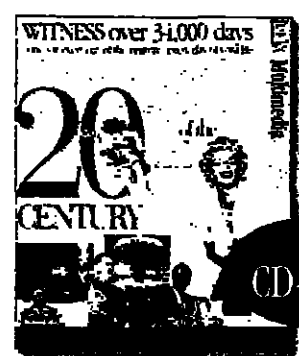
John Redwood MP interrupted the parliamentary discussion of these difficult matters to ask how the Labour Party could expect to be heard on economic questions when it could not handle a 10-year-old child in Nottinghamshire. Unless the national economic debate is raised to a higher level than that, we shall see more and more of the underclass, and, not improbably, yet more rioting children.

Robin Marris is Emeritus Professor of Economics at Birkbeck College, London University. His book *How to Save the Underclass* is published by Macmillan (£40 hardback, £12.99 paperback).

ON THIS DAY 1991



Robert Maxwell found dead 5th November 1991



Chronicle of the 20th Century
The most comprehensive, informative and entertaining guide to the era ever produced
DK Multimedia

سكزا من الأصل

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Oftel to look at £13bn BT takeover

Chris Goddard
Business Correspondent

British Telecom's proposed £13bn takeover of MCI, the US long-distance telephone operator, is facing mounting regulatory hurdles last night as AT&T, its giant American rival, said it would lodge a formal objection with the UK telecommunications watchdog, Oftel.

It also emerged that it will take up to a year to gain approval for the deal from competition authorities on both sides of the Atlantic.

One possible line of concern that could be investigated by Don Cruickshank, the UK regulator, is the 13.5 per cent stake in Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation which, under the terms of the deal, will be inherited by BT. Mr Cruickshank has recently ordered BT to stop cross-promoting BSkyB satellite TV services in its advertising literature.

BT has already said it expects to take until autumn next year to get official approval from

regulators. Mentioning BT alongside the other leading European operators, he said: "If a country has a single, strong national telecommunications firm, it has a big problem."

"In the US we are very lucky that AT&T was broken up by court order in the early 1980s. Yet nowhere else around the globe do we see a repetition of our clearly successful experiment with demonopolisation."

Shares in BT soared yesterday as most City analysts gave the deal with MCI their seal of approval on the grounds that it boosted short-term value for shareholders.

BT shares ended the day 22p higher at 373p, having risen at one stage to 384p.

The highest rated UK team of telecoms analysts at BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays Bank, changed their assessment of the stock to a "buy" recommendation while Hoare Govett, the stockbrokers, raised their fair value judgement of BT's share price from 350p to 400p.



Transatlantic team: The new Concert logo

spokeswoman for Oftel confirmed the UK side of the investigation had begun and said: "When we'll finish we can't say. We don't know until we study the agreement what sort of issues we need to address. There are other authorities who will be involved, including the DTI."

AT&T had previously announced its intention to lobby Oftel's US counterpart, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Department of Justice on the grounds that BT still had a virtual monopoly of local telephone services.

US regulators have made clear they will only approve the deal if US firms can gain similar access to British phone markets as rival operators can achieve in the US. AT&T has 55 per cent of the US long-distance phone market, while since the group's break-up in the mid-1980s, it has been excluded from the \$100bn local market.

However, during a visit to the UK in September, the chairman of the FCC expressed serious concerns about the openness of all European telecoms markets. In a speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, Reed Hundt warned that most European telecoms markets remained closed to competition for residential cus-

tomers. BT said on Sunday it would raise its full-year dividend by 6.1 per cent to 19.85p, compared with a 5.6 per cent rise the previous year. Hoare Govett said this alone added 20p to the value of BT shares with the rest coming from the 35p-a-share special dividend, due to be paid next year.

Other analysts argued the special dividend, coupled with the prospect of share buybacks from 1997 onwards, would support BT shares through the turbulence of merging the two organisations.

"They've put an artificial floor under the share price with the dividend. In addition, BT shares will also represent 4 per cent of the London stock market, which means the big institutions will all be squeezed as demand for the shares increases for technical reasons," said John Karidis, from Kleinwort Benson.

However, analysts pointed out that the other main benefits of the deal were based on the potential for future growth which was much harder to calculate. "I suspect MCI may find it just as hard to break into the local US phone market as the cable companies have found when battling against BT in the UK," said one.

Comment, page 19



Going through the roof: Analysts say that house price inflation in double digits is looking more likely as prices increase sharply

Zip in homes market 'signals rate rise'

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Fresh signs of zip in the housing market point to the prospect of further rises in interest rates, economists said yesterday. The Bank of England's quarterly Inflation Report, out tomorrow, is expected to say that unless base rates increase again the Government is likely to miss its inflation target.

"It is very unlikely that just one touch on the tiller will be enough," said Paul Mortimer-Lee, chief economist at investment bank Paribas.

He added that the Bank was likely to shade down its inflation forecast compared with its August report, but it was very

clear that the economy was building up steam.

Official figures due today are expected to signal a bounce in manufacturing output in September. Meanwhile the evidence of buoyant consumer demand continues to pile up.

House prices rose by 1.6 per cent in October, the biggest monthly increase since February 1994, according to Halifax Building Society. That took them 7.1 per cent higher than a year earlier, the fastest year-on-year increase since 1989.

The average house costs £65,609 against £61,251 in October 1995. Halifax has revised up its full-year forecast for house prices to 7 per cent and is predicting a similar advance

next year. Other housing market experts think this is still much too cautious. James Barty, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, said: "The housing market is very buoyant. House prices in double digits across the country is looking more and more likely."

Last week, Nationwide Building Society reported a 7.9 per cent rise in prices over the past year, and a jump of 0.8 per cent last month compared with September.

Separate figures yesterday showed that new housebuilding starts rose by 16 per cent in the three months to September. The total of 47,100 starts was 13 per cent higher than in the same

three months a year earlier. Treasury minister Angela Knight said: "The building bricks of recovery, which have long since been there in other parts of the economy, are now in housebuilding too. Bricks are back in business."

Last month also saw an unexpectedly large rise of 0.7 per cent in M0, the narrow measure of the money supply. Its year-on-year growth increased to 7.5 per cent from 7.2 per cent in September.

The amount of cash in circulation in the economy, the main component of M0, climbed by £100m during the month. Although M0 is not a reliable month-to-month indicator of retail sales, yesterday's

figures did confirm the general picture of robust consumer spending.

The weekly sales figures from John Lewis, the department store group, added further anecdotal evidence. The amount of money passing through its tills in the week to 26 October was the highest so far this year, though the timing of half-term meant the year-on-year rate of growth dipped.

The London Chamber of Commerce said that the economy in London was "booming", with growth expected to top 4.6 per cent this year. It predicted unemployment in the capital would dip below 10 per cent by the end of the year for the first time since 1992.

Leslau cashes in £5m Burford share options

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

Nick Leslau, the 36 year old chief executive of the Burford and Trocadero property groups, cashed in share options worth more than £5m yesterday to pay off personal tax and debts. Following the deal he still retains Burford shares worth another £5m and a further 2.8 million options.

Considered one of the shrewdest property dealers, Leslau has built Burford rapidly with his partner Nick Wray, who made his fortune in the 1980s by buying a political newsletter and turning it into a widely-read City tip sheet.

Burford said yesterday that Mr Leslau had exercised his option to buy 4.8 million shares at

28.4p. They were placed in the market by BZW to raise £5.14m excluding the cost of the options. Burford's shares, which have risen from 63p a year ago, closed 0.5p lower at 136.5p yesterday.

The rise in Burford's shares follows a decade during which the company's net assets have risen more than eightfold, easily outpacing the rest of the property sector. As a result, the company has become one of the best regarded in the industry.

One of Mr Leslau's most astute moves was the £96m purchase of the Trocadero site in the middle of London's Piccadilly Circus. Previously a white elephant, the Troc had brought down three former owners but was transformed into a leisure goldmine and

spun off into a separately quoted stock market vehicle.

Leslau persuaded Japanese games giant Sega to develop a virtual reality theme park inside the centre called Segaworld to capitalise on the vast numbers of young tourists who through the West End each year but had previously walked past, or worse, through the Trocadero.

Other high profile acquisitions by Leslau and Wray, dubbed with reference to the chairman of British Land the "Ritblats of tomorrow", have included the rights to End Bliton's literary estate including children's favourite Noddy.

The company also bought the London Pavilion, the shopping centre next to the Trocadero and announced a deal with Marvel Mania.



Caption - locked to grid

Invesco values its funds at \$150bn

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

Invesco said yesterday it was creating one of the largest fund management groups in the world, controlling \$150bn (£91bn) of funds, following agreement yesterday to take over the Texas-based AIM for \$1.6bn.

The deal values the 72 per cent of the mutual fund group held by AIM founder directors and management at £720m and creates a group in the same league as Mercury Asset Management, Britain's biggest independent fund manager.

Four top executives of AIM, including Ted Bauer, the 77 year old founder, are to be locked in with four year fixed term contracts which will then convert to one year rolling contracts. Mr Bauer's stake in AIM is worth about £1.10 and he will end up with 5 per cent of the merged company.

In total, seven of the AIM directors will together hold a 20 per cent stake in the merged company, to be named Amvesco, and they have agreed not to sell their stakes for five years.

The announcement revealed that Invesco was notified last month that it is being investigated by Imro, the fund management regulator, for possible breaches of rules which "should be the subject of disciplinary proceedings."

Invesco said it had notified the breaches to Imro and they related to technical requirements for bank accounts and to written compliance procedures. It added that there was no loss to clients and any penalties would not be material.

One British analyst described the AIM mutual fund business as America's nearest equivalent to Perpetual, which is a fast growing British unit trust business with a reputation for innovation.

Invesco is paying with \$1.1bn worth of new ordinary shares with the other \$500m to be raised in cash from loans and a proposed one for five rights issue, which is expected to raise more than £100m.

AIM shareholders will own about 45 per cent of the enlarged group, and all of them including TA Associates, a US venture capital firm which will hold 12 per cent of Amvesco - will be restricted for at least a year in selling their stakes.

A majority of AIM shareholders have agreed to the proposal, which Invesco said would be broadly neutral for its earnings per share next year. Mr Bauer said that there was no plan to switch the company's main stock market quote from London to the US, although he confirmed that the deal raised the proportion of the business in the US from 90 per cent to 95 per cent.

Invesco has already switched its business heavily across the Atlantic under its chairman, Charles Brady, who is based in Atlanta.

But Mr Brady said that Invesco still had 50 per cent of its shareholding in London.

Leading cable operators join anti-Sky campaign

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

Britain's cable companies will renew their attack on Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB today, claiming the company is acting anti-competitively in the supply of pay-TV programming in the UK market.

For the first time, two of the country's leading cable operators, Nynex CableComms and

Telewest Communications, are lending their voice to the anti-Sky campaign, despite having signed controversial long-term supply agreements with BSkyB that had previously led to deep rifts in the cable industry.

In a statement signed by all cable operators, the industry will reject BSkyB's most recent "rate card", which lays out the terms and the prices under which Sky's channels are offered

on a wholesale basis to the cable industry. The companies are even threatening legal action against BSkyB, and will call on the Office of Fair Trading to look again at the company's dominant position in the market for pay-TV programming.

The move coincides with submissions to the European Commission in Brussels criticising the ever-closer ties between BSkyB and BT, which are co-op-

erating on the introduction of digital services from next year.

On BSkyB's rate card, a senior cable source said last night: "We don't like the fact that we are forced to sell channels in a certain way, despite what customers might want. Viewers are required to pay for services that they neither want nor use."

"We decided as an industry that it was time everybody has taken a fresh new look, based on

customers' preferences," said Stephen Davidson, chief executive of Telewest Communications, and chairman of the Cable Communications Association.

The new rate card was produced following a formal inquiry by the OFT, which largely cleared BSkyB of charges that it was acting anti-competitively.

The OFT asked the cable industry to respond to the revised rate card, which was meant to

make it easier for cable operators to package cable channels in line with market demand. However, the cable companies will argue that the new terms are no less onerous than the previous rate card, and that it could undermine the principles of consumer choice.

The attack on Sky follows several days of intensely negative press comment about BSkyB's control of the pay-TV market.

Murdoch set to price share issue

Matthew Horsman

Rupert Murdoch was last night poised to proceed with his controversial £1bn-plus preference share issue, convertible into shares of BSkyB, his 40-per-cent owned UK satellite broadcaster. Dealers were expected the issue to be priced late last night, following the close of the market in New York.

Meanwhile, it emerged last night that Granada, the media company with an 11 per cent stake in BSkyB, was also considering ways of converting its shares into cash, as part of its attempts to reduce debt following its £3.9bn takeover of Forté this year.

A Granada insider said: "We are looking at ways to mortgage the BSkyB stake, but no decision has yet been taken."

Mr Murdoch's convertible issue, which was originally pitched last week, had to be delayed when it became clear that it coincided with a "close period" just in advance of BSkyB's quarterly results, released last Friday.

Mr Murdoch's News America Holdings, which is issuing the

convertible shares, will retain the right to pay converting shareholders in cash after five years if he decides to avoid diluting his stake.

At last night's price of 547p, down 22p on the day, the preference share issue would be convertible into about 10 per cent of BSkyB, or a quarter of Mr Murdoch's total stake. The proceeds are aimed at bolstering News Corporation's development of digital television, particularly in the US.

The issue, news of which has helped send BSkyB shares sharply lower in recent days, was seen by media analysts as proof that Mr Murdoch did not expect the stock to increase further in the medium term, following its rapid rise since the beginning of the year. His decision to raise money on the strength of the stake reminded the City of his issue of shares convertible into Pearson, the media conglomerate, in the early 1990s.

The preference shares, which are to carry a coupon of about 5 per cent, can be converted after five years. They will be marketed in the US, with Merrill Lynch as sole agent.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Week's chg	Change%	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD %			
FTSE 100	3648.50	-73.9	-1.9	4073.10	3632.30	3.97			
FTSE 250	4429.20	-2.3	-0.1	4568.60	4015.30	3.52			
FTSE 350	1971.40	-29.2	-1.5	2022.10	1816.60	3.87			
FTSE SmallCap	2167.41	-11.5	-0.5	2244.36	1954.06	3.14			
FTSE All-Share	1946.55	-27.3	-1.4	1994.54	1791.55	3.82			
New York	6021.93	+14.9	+0.2	6094.23	5032.94	2.15			
Tokyo	20631.06	-106.9	-0.5	20666.80	19734.70	0.781			
Hong Kong	12529.27	+149.1	+1.2	12529.27	10204.67	3.311			
Frankfurt	2683.25	+9.0	+0.3	2734.62	2253.36	1.751			

Statistics as of 4 November

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
US interest rates									
Money Market Rates									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	6.09	6.09	7.70	7.80	7.81	8.02			
US	5.38	5.58	6.35	5.92	6.66	6.26			
Japan	0.47	0.50	2.52						
Germany	3.06	3.31	6.02	6.44	6.85				

CURRENCIES

£/\$

\$/DM

Pound vs.

	Close	Week's Chg	Tr. %
\$ (London)	1.5378	+3.35c	1.5876
\$ (NY/Ind)	1.6380	+4.55c	1.5799
DM (London)	2.4833	+3.97p	2.2264
¥ (London)	186.09c	+¥1.34	163.78
£ Index	90.9	+1.7	84.3

Dollar vs.

	Close	Week's Chg	Tr. %
£ (London)	0.6106	-1.28	0.6327
¥ (Tokyo)	0.6105	-1.74	0.6330
DM (London)	1.5165	-0.88p	1.4155
¥ (London)	113.50c	+¥0.205	103.665
\$ Index	97.0	-0.4	94.3

OTHER INDICATORS

	Close	Week's chg	Year Ago	Index	Latest Tr. %	Real Price
Oil Brent \$	22.70	-1.28	16.63	RPI	159.8	+2.12pct/150.6 14 Nov
Gold \$	377.95	-4.75	382.60	GDP	108.9	+2.30c/105.7 Jun 27
C £	230.80	-8.57	242.19	Base Rates	—	6.00pc 6.75 —

OTHER INDICATORS									
Index	Close	Week's chg	Tr. %	Index	Close	Week's chg	Tr. %	Index	Close
Oil Brent \$	22.70	-1.28	16.63	RPI	153.8	+2.12p	150.6	14 Nov	
Gold \$	377.95	-4.75	362.60	GDP	108.9	+2.30p	105.7	Jun 97	
Gold £	230.80	-8.57	242.19	Base Rates		6.00pc	6.75		

هكذا من الأصل

business

AB Foods cooks up big advance

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

It's hard to get too excited about AB Foods mixture of sugar, bread and Irish retailing, but you have to take your hat off to Garry Weston's unerring ability to beat expectations. Figures for the year to September had him doing it again and the shares, which have more than doubled since the end of 1992, added another 8.5p yesterday to close at 425.5p.

Partly, it's just been a much better year for food producers in general. After the margin squeeze of 1994 and 1995, pressure from raw material prices and packaging has eased. At the other end of the equation prices are moving in the right direction and AB's cost structure, especially in milling and baking, is in better shape.

Against that backdrop, the figures were always likely to be better, but a 17 per cent rise in world-wide sales to £5.71bn and an 18 per cent operating profit jump were better than forecast. At the pre-tax line, profits rose 15 per cent to £430m and earnings per share were 12 per cent higher at 31p.

For once, British Sugar was not the driving force, with profits marginally lower this year at £183m as the strength of sterling reversed the benefits accruing from changes to the green pound. Allied Bakeries, however, continued to consolidate last year's bounce from five years of declining profits.

Looking forward, analysts expect things to get a bit tougher, but they tend always to say that about AB Foods and end up looking over-cautious. Still, on the basis of profits of £450m this time and earnings per share of 32.5p, the steady progress this year does appear to be running slightly out of steam.

Arguably, however, the earnings story is only part of the investment case and few investors are likely to go short of AB Foods while the company continues to sit on an £800m cash pile. If it does nothing that will be the best part of £1bn before long, providing a meaningful war chest. Having acquired British Sugar in 1990, AB Foods has proved it has no fear of the big deal so a lot of expectation is riding on where Mr Weston's attentions will focus. What seems likely is that he will steer clear of increasing his exposure to Sainsbury's or Tesco. Recent deals in frozen dough, glucose and other ingredients have pointed to better margin avenues than the bread and packaged goods whose fate lies in the hands of the all-powerful grocers.

On the basis of the expected modest rise in profits and earnings this year, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 13 and they yield just 3 per cent assuming the forecast 10.25p dividend. In the absence of a

Blacks hums as sport booms

Investors with long memories will remember Blacks Leisure, the camping and sports clothes group, as a 1980s wonder stock that never quite made it. The group has been attempting to rehabilitate itself since the arrival in 1989 of Simon Bentley, now chairman and chief executive, although it is only in the last three years that things have started to hum.

Underlying profits have soared from £210,000 in 1993-94 to £2.84m last year and yesterday's interim results continued in the same vein. Pre-tax profits more than quintupled from £736,000 to £3.9m in the six months to August, putting another 5.5p onto a share price which has zoomed from 49.5p to

295.5p since the start of the year. Mr Bentley has been heaving away to improve the performance of Blacks, getting rid of non-performers like the footwear businesses and the Miss Sam women'swear wholesaler.

But it is the boom in the market for sportswear as a fashion item which is really fuelling Blacks' growth. Unlike Sears' ill-fated Olympus chain, the group is embracing the current passion to wear brand names like Nike, Reebok and Adidas with gusto. With a Nike annual advertising spend of something like \$400m, it is perhaps hardly surprising that, like-for-like sales in the group's First Sport chain have leapt 25 per cent in the first half. Fifteen new stores this year will take the total to 58 and Mr Bentley believes there is scope to more than double that figure in two to three years.

Blacks Outdoor, the original chain, continues to squeeze growth out of the camping and outdoor clothes market, with like-for-like sales marching 22 per cent ahead in the six months. Meanwhile ActiveVenture, the move into more up-market outdoor wear, should chip in getting on for £1m this year, de-

spite only being launched in August 1995. With underlying sales 15 per cent ahead in the second half, profit forecasts have been raised to £8.8m for the full year, putting the shares on a forward p/e of 17. With more good growth next year bringing that rating sharply lower they are still reasonable value, albeit with some risks. The increasing dependence on fashion leaves Blacks vulnerable to shifts in taste.

Umeco's roll continues

Umeco, the aircraft components to cooker tubes group, is another company whose shares have put on a sparkling performance this year. Just 127p at the beginning of January, the price has since soared up to 299p, after another 8p rise yesterday.

Profits have been on a roll since Umeco recorded a loss of £144,000 in 1993 and the latest half-year figures give few reasons for concern. The pre-tax total soared by two-thirds to £1.03m in the half-year to September, with the original businesses recording gains of 22-44 per cent and Torbue, the cooker parts business, now turned round and trading profitably.

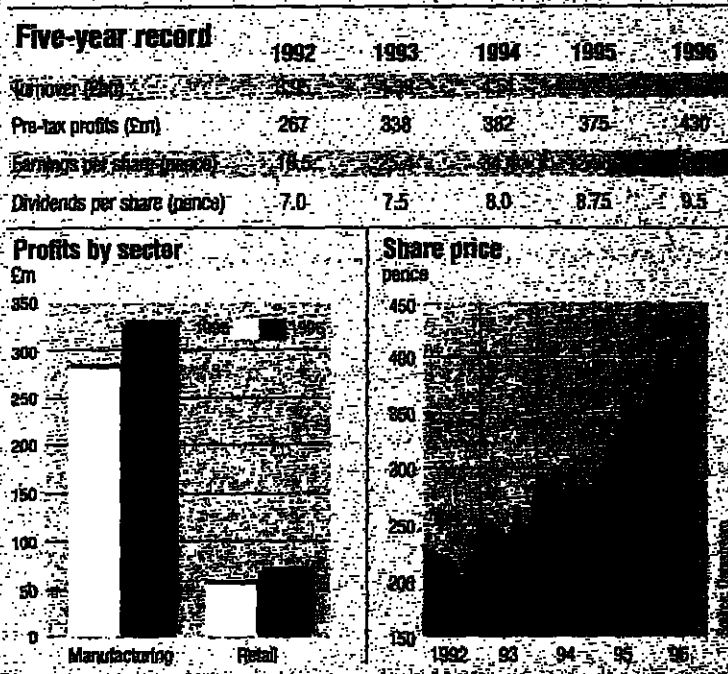
The group's fortunes started to take off in the second half of last year. An order moratorium lasting several years imposed by the Ministry of Defence was broken towards the end of the year, to the benefit of the fluid transfer operation, which makes ground refuelling vehicles for aircraft. Elsewhere, Patonair, which distributes fasteners and seals to the aerospace industry, is cashing in on the switch to third party distribution by the big players in the industry, as is B&K, a sealants, glues and speciality chemicals operation.

The rate of profits growth chalked up in the first half is unlikely to be repeated until big orders won this year start to kick in in 1997. Business won by Patonair from BMW-Rolls Royce, GKN Westland Helicopters and British Aerospace is now said to be worth approaching £5m a year, while fluid transfer has picked up further "substantial" orders from the MoD.

With no sign of a let-up in the trend towards outsourcing and growing consumer demand for boilers and cookers, the future looks set fair. Full-year profits of £2.5m, rising to £3.25m in 1996, would put the shares on a distant forward rating of 15. Fair value, with the remaining 7 per cent holding of Osman Abdullah, formerly of Evered, providing a potential overhang.

AB FOODS: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £2.63bn, share price 425.5p



Rolls to supply A3XX engines for Airbus

Michael Harrison

Roll-Royce was yesterday selected to supply engines for Airbus Industrie's super-jumbo, the A3XX, which will be capable of carrying more than 600 passengers and is due to enter service in 2003.

Airbus has signed a memorandum of understanding with Rolls to develop its latest version of the Trent engine to power the new aircraft.

The Trent 900, which will have a take-off thrust of 80,000 lbs, has been specifically designed for the next generation of super-jumbos.

The four-engine A3XX is initially planned to appear in two versions - a 555-seater aircraft with a range of 8,500 nautical miles and a bigger version capable of flying 656 passengers. A consortium made up of the two US engine makers, General

Electric and Pratt and Whitney, is expected to sign a similar memorandum in the next fortnight.

The agreement with Rolls will pave the way for Airbus to make more detailed offers on the performance of the A3XX to prospective airline customers. It is working on the design and specification of the aircraft with a handful of carriers who are keen to start flying much bigger aircraft, including British Airways and Singapore Airlines.

The four Airbus partners have stipulated that the A3XX should have 15-20 per cent lower operating costs than the current Boeing 747. Key to this efficiency target will be the performance of the engines.

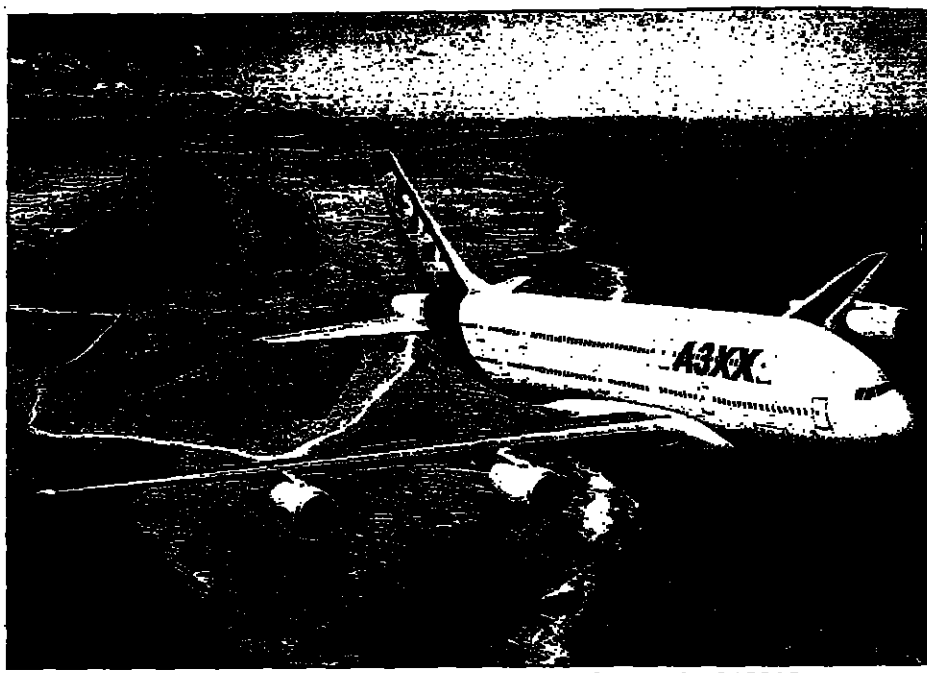
Charles Cuddington, director of the Trent 900 programme, said that the engine was even lighter than the Trent 800 on

which it is based, giving a significant payload advantage for airlines.

Airbus is expected to take a decision on the launch of the aircraft next year. It estimates demand for 500-seater plus airliners at 1,380 worth \$280m up to 2014.

News of the memorandum with Rolls came as Airbus announced that the Middle Eastern airline, Emirates, is to buy 16 wide-bodies A330s in a deal worth about \$2bn. The airline has taken options on a further seven A330s.

This is the first order for the A330 from the Middle East and will make Emirates the biggest operator of the aircraft. Emirates will use the 243-seater aircraft on services from Dubai to Europe, South-east Asia and South Africa. Emirates has yet to make a choice of engine for its new fleet of A330s.



Biggest jumbo of all: The A3XX is due to enter world-wide service in 2003

"A Fast Well Equipped PC - A Great Choice For Experts And Beginners Alike"

Computer Buyer Magazine



0%

Interest Free Credit

MJN have put together two superb high performance PC systems with a massive software bundle to provide you with everything you are ever likely to need. Take a closer look at the amazing specification of these systems which are available on Interest Free Credit from only £58 per month. Early orders also qualify for a free 28.8 modem

Relative Processor Performance
Based on 3.0 Winstone 96% as certified by MDR labs.

Processor	Performance
P133	~100
P166	~150
P166+	~180
P200	~250

Award Winning Machines

MJN 01282 777 555

Telephone sales lines are open Monday - Friday 9am - 7pm. Saturday 9am - 5pm

MJN Technology Limited, Granville House, Blackburn Rd, Sironstone, Burnley, Lancs, BB12 7GT. Tel 01282 777 555 Fax 01282 77 08 44. Shareware user prices shown. Conventional monitors shown. 31 inch screen shown. £25.95. 33.5 inch screen shown. £35.95. 35 inch screen shown. £45.95. 38.5 inch screen shown. £55.95. 40 inch screen shown. £65.95. 42 inch screen shown. £75.95. 45 inch screen shown. £85.95. 48 inch screen shown. £95.95. 50 inch screen shown. £105.95. 52 inch screen shown. £115.95. 55 inch screen shown. £125.95. 58 inch screen shown. £135.95. 60 inch screen shown. £145.95. 62 inch screen shown. £155.95. 65 inch screen shown. £165.95. 68 inch screen shown. £175.95. 70 inch screen shown. £185.95. 72 inch screen shown. £195.95. 75 inch screen shown. £205.95. 78 inch screen shown. £215.95. 80 inch screen shown. £225.95. 82 inch screen shown. £235.95. 85 inch screen shown. £245.95. 88 inch screen shown. £255.95. 90 inch screen shown. £265.95. 92 inch screen shown. £275.95. 95 inch screen shown. £285.95. 98 inch screen shown. £295.95. 100 inch screen shown. £305.95. 102 inch screen shown. £315.95. 105 inch screen shown. £325.95. 108 inch screen shown. £335.95. 110 inch screen shown. £345.95. 112 inch screen shown. £355.95. 115 inch screen shown. £365.95. 118 inch screen shown. £375.95. 120 inch screen shown. £385.95. 122 inch screen shown. £395.95. 125 inch screen shown. £405.95. 128 inch screen shown. £415.95. 130 inch screen shown. £425.95. 132 inch screen shown. £435.95. 135 inch screen shown. £445.95. 138 inch screen shown. £455.95. 140 inch screen shown. £465.95. 142 inch screen shown. £475.95. 145 inch screen shown. £485.95. 148 inch screen shown. £495.95. 150 inch screen shown. £505.95. 152 inch screen shown. £515.95. 155 inch screen shown. £525.95. 158 inch screen shown. £535.95. 160 inch screen shown. £545.95. 162 inch screen shown. £555.95. 165 inch screen shown. £565.95. 168 inch screen shown. £575.95. 170 inch screen shown. £585.95. 172 inch screen shown. £595.95. 175 inch screen shown. £605.95. 178 inch screen shown. £615.95. 180 inch screen shown. £625.95. 182 inch screen shown. £635.95. 185 inch screen shown. £645.95. 188 inch screen shown. £655.95. 190 inch screen shown. £665.95. 192 inch screen shown. £675.95. 195 inch screen shown. £685.95. 198 inch screen shown. £695.95. 200 inch screen shown. £705.95. 202 inch screen shown. £715.95. 205 inch screen shown. £725.95. 208 inch screen shown. £735.95. 210 inch screen shown. £745.95. 212 inch screen shown. £755.95. 215 inch screen shown. £765.95. 218 inch screen shown. £775.95. 220 inch screen shown. £785.95. 222 inch screen shown. £795.95. 225 inch screen shown. £805.95. 228 inch screen shown. £815.95. 230 inch screen shown. £825.95. 232 inch screen shown. £835.95. 235 inch screen shown. £845.95. 238 inch screen shown. £855.95. 240 inch screen shown. £865.95. 242 inch screen shown. £875.95. 245 inch screen shown. £885.95. 248 inch screen shown. £895.95. 250 inch screen shown. £905.95. 252 inch screen shown. £915.95. 255 inch screen shown. £925.95. 258 inch screen shown. £935.95. 260 inch screen shown. £945.95. 262 inch screen shown. £955.95. 265 inch screen shown. £965.95. 268 inch screen shown. £975.95. 270 inch screen shown. £985.95. 272 inch screen shown. £995.95. 275 inch screen shown. £1005.95. 278 inch screen shown. £1015.95. 280 inch screen shown. £1025.95. 282 inch screen shown. £1035.95. 285 inch screen shown. £1045.95. 288 inch screen shown. £1055.95. 290 inch screen shown. £1065.95. 292 inch screen shown. £1075.95. 295 inch screen shown. £1085.95. 298 inch screen shown. £1095.95. 300 inch screen shown. £1105.95. 302 inch screen shown. £1115.95. 305 inch screen shown. £1125.95. 308 inch screen shown. £1135.95. 310 inch screen shown. £1145.95. 312 inch screen shown. £1155.95. 315 inch screen shown. £1165.95. 318 inch screen shown. £1175.95. 320 inch screen shown. £1185.95. 322 inch screen shown. £1195.95. 325 inch screen shown. £1205.95. 328 inch screen shown. £1215.95. 330 inch screen shown. £1225.95. 332 inch screen shown. £1235.95. 335 inch screen shown. £1245.95. 338 inch screen shown. £1255.95. 340 inch screen shown. £1265.95. 342 inch screen shown. £1275.95. 345 inch screen shown. £1285.95. 348 inch screen shown. £1295.95. 350 inch screen shown. £1305.95. 352 inch screen shown. £1315.95. 355 inch screen shown. £1325.95. 358 inch screen shown. £1335.95. 360 inch screen shown. £1345.95. 362 inch screen shown. £1355.95. 365 inch screen shown. £1365.95. 368 inch screen shown. £1375.95. 370 inch screen shown. £1385.95. 372 inch screen shown. £1395.95. 375 inch screen shown. £1405.95. 378 inch screen shown. £1415.95. 380 inch screen shown. £1425.95. 382 inch screen shown. £1435.95. 385 inch screen shown. £1445.95. 388 inch screen shown. £1455.95. 390 inch screen shown. £1465.95. 392 inch screen shown. £1475.95. 395 inch screen shown. £1485.95. 398 inch screen shown. £1495.95. 400 inch screen shown. £1505.95. 402 inch screen shown. £1515.95. 405 inch screen shown. £1525.95. 408 inch screen shown. £1535.95. 410 inch screen shown. £1545.95. 412 inch screen shown. £1555.95. 415 inch screen shown. £1565.95. 418 inch screen shown. £1575.95. 420 inch screen shown. £1585.95. 422 inch screen shown. £1595.95. 425 inch screen shown. £1605.95. 428 inch screen shown. £1615.95. 430 inch screen shown. £1625.95. 432 inch screen shown. £1635.95. 435 inch screen shown. £1645.95. 438 inch screen shown. £1655.95. 440 inch screen shown. £1665.95. 442 inch screen shown. £1675.95. 445 inch screen shown. £1685.95. 448 inch screen shown. £1695.95. 450 inch screen shown. £1705.95. 452 inch screen shown. £1715.95. 455 inch screen shown. £1725.95. 458 inch screen shown. £1735.95. 460 inch screen shown. £1745.95. 462 inch screen shown. £1755.95. 465 inch screen shown. £1765.95. 468 inch screen shown. £1775.95. 470 inch screen shown. £1785.95. 472 inch screen shown. £1795.95. 475 inch screen shown. £1805.95. 478 inch screen shown. £1815.95. 480 inch screen shown. £1825.95. 482 inch screen shown. £1835.95. 485 inch screen shown. £1845.95. 488 inch screen shown. £1855.95. 490 inch screen shown. £1865.95. 492 inch screen shown. £1875.95. 495 inch screen shown. £1885.95. 498 inch screen shown. £1895.95. 500 inch screen shown. £1905.95. 502 inch screen shown. £1915.95. 505 inch screen shown. £1925.95. 508 inch screen shown. £1935.95. 510 inch screen shown. £1945.95. 512 inch screen shown. £1955.95. 515 inch screen shown. £1965.95. 518 inch screen shown. £1975.95. 520 inch screen shown. £1985.95. 522 inch screen shown. £1995.95. 525 inch screen shown. £2005.95. 528 inch screen shown. £2015.95. 530 inch screen shown. £2025.95. 532 inch screen shown. £2035.95. 535 inch screen shown. £2045.95. 538 inch screen shown. £2055.95. 540 inch screen shown. £2065.95. 542 inch screen shown. £2075.95. 545 inch screen shown. £2085.95. 548 inch screen shown. £2095.95. 550 inch screen shown. £2105.95. 552 inch screen shown. £2115.95. 555 inch screen shown. £2125.95. 558 inch screen shown. £2135.95. 560 inch screen shown. £2145.95. 562 inch screen shown. £2155.95. 565 inch screen shown. £2165.95. 568 inch screen shown. £2175.95. 570 inch screen shown. £2185.95. 572 inch screen shown. £2195.95. 575 inch screen shown. £2205.95. 578 inch screen shown. £2215.95. 580 inch screen shown. £2225.95. 582 inch screen shown. £2235.95. 585 inch screen shown. £2245.95. 588 inch screen shown. £2255.95. 590 inch screen shown. £2265.95. 592 inch screen shown. £2275.95. 595 inch screen shown. £2285.95. 598 inch screen shown. £2295.95. 600 inch screen shown. £2305.95. 602 inch screen shown. £2315.95. 605 inch screen shown. £2325.95. 608 inch screen shown. £2335.95. 610 inch screen shown. £2345.95. 612 inch screen shown. £2355.95. 615 inch screen shown. £2365.95. 618 inch screen shown. £2375.95. 620 inch screen shown. £2385.95. 622 inch screen shown. £2395.95. 625 inch screen shown. £2405.95. 628 inch screen shown. £2415.95. 630 inch screen shown. £2425.95. 632 inch screen shown. £2435.95. 635 inch screen shown. £2445.95. 638 inch screen shown. £2455.95. 640 inch screen shown. £2465.95. 642 inch screen shown. £2475.95. 645 inch screen shown. £2485.95. 648 inch screen shown. £2495.95. 650 inch screen shown. £2505.95. 652 inch screen shown. £2515.95. 655 inch screen shown. £2525.95. 658 inch screen shown. £2535.95. 660 inch screen shown. £2545.95. 662 inch screen shown. £2555.95. 665 inch screen shown. £2565.95. 668 inch screen shown. £2575.95. 670 inch screen shown. £2585.95. 672 inch screen shown. £2595.95. 675 inch screen shown. £2605.95. 678 inch screen shown. £2615.95. 680 inch screen shown. £2625.95. 682 inch screen shown. £2635.95. 685 inch screen shown. £2645.95. 688 inch screen shown. £2655.95. 690 inch screen shown. £2665.95. 692 inch screen shown. £2675.95. 695 inch screen shown. £2685.95. 698 inch screen shown. £2695.95. 700 inch screen shown. £2705.95. 702 inch screen shown. £2715.95. 705 inch screen shown. £2725.95. 708 inch screen shown. £2735.95. 710 inch screen shown. £2745.95. 712 inch screen shown. £2755.95. 715 inch screen shown. £2765.95. 718 inch screen shown. £2775.95. 720 inch screen shown. £2785.95. 722 inch screen shown. £2795.95. 725 inch screen shown. £2805.95. 728 inch screen shown. £2815.95. 730 inch screen shown. £2825.95. 732 inch screen shown. £2835.95. 735 inch screen shown. £2845.95. 738 inch screen shown. £2855.95. 740 inch screen shown. £2865.95. 742 inch screen shown. £2875.95. 745 inch screen shown. £2885.95. 748 inch screen shown. £2895.95. 750 inch screen shown. £2905.95. 752 inch screen shown. £2915.95. 755 inch screen shown. £2925.95. 758 inch screen shown. £2935.95. 760 inch screen shown. £2945.95. 762 inch screen shown. £2955.95. 765 inch screen shown. £2965.95. 768 inch screen shown. £2975.95. 770 inch screen shown. £2985.95. 772 inch screen shown. £2995.95. 775 inch screen shown. £3005.95. 778 inch screen shown. £3015.95. 780 inch screen shown. £3025.95. 782 inch screen shown. £3035.95. 785 inch screen shown. £3045.95. 788 inch screen shown. £3055.95. 790 inch screen shown. £3065.95. 792 inch screen shown. £3075.95. 795 inch screen shown. £3085.95. 798 inch screen shown. £3095.95. 800 inch screen shown. £3105.95. 802 inch screen shown. £3115.95. 805 inch screen shown. £3125.95. 808 inch screen shown. £3135.95. 810 inch screen shown. £3145.95. 812 inch screen shown. £3155.95. 815 inch screen shown. £3165.95. 818 inch screen shown. £3175.95. 820 inch screen shown. £3185.95. 822 inch screen shown. £3195.95. 825 inch screen shown. £3205.95. 828 inch screen shown. £3215.95. 830 inch screen shown. £3225.95. 832 inch screen shown. £3235.95. 835 inch screen shown. £3245.95. 838 inch screen shown. £3255.95. 840 inch screen shown. £3265.95. 842 inch screen shown. £3275.95. 845 inch screen shown. £3285.95. 848 inch screen shown. £3295.95. 850 inch screen shown. £3305.95. 852 inch screen shown. £3315.95. 855 inch screen shown. £3325.95. 858 inch screen shown. £3335.95. 860 inch screen shown. £3345.95. 862 inch screen shown. £3355.95. 865 inch screen shown. £3365.95. 868 inch screen shown. £3375.95. 870 inch screen shown. £3385.95. 872 inch screen shown. £3395.95. 875 inch screen shown. £3405.95. 878 inch screen shown. £3415.95. 880 inch screen shown. £3425.95. 882 inch screen shown. £3435.95. 885 inch screen shown. £3445.95. 888 inch screen shown. £3455.95. 890 inch screen shown. £3465.95. 892 inch screen shown. £3475.95. 895 inch screen shown. £3485.95. 898 inch screen shown. £3495.95. 900 inch screen shown. £3505.95. 902 inch screen shown. £3515.95. 905 inch screen shown. £3525.95. 908 inch screen shown. £3535.95. 910 inch screen shown. £3545.95. 912 inch screen shown. £3555.95. 915 inch screen shown. £3565.95. 918 inch screen shown. £3575.95. 920 inch screen shown. £3585.95. 922 inch screen shown. £3595.95. 925 inch screen shown. £3605.95. 928 inch screen shown. £3615.95. 930 inch screen shown. £3625.95. 932 inch screen shown. £3635.95. 935 inch screen shown. £3645.95. 938 inch screen shown. £3655.95. 940 inch screen shown. £3665.95. 942 inch screen shown. £3675.95. 945 inch screen shown. £3685.95. 948 inch screen shown. £3695.95. 950 inch screen shown. £3705.95. 952 inch screen shown. £3715.95. 955 inch screen shown. £3725.95. 958 inch screen shown. £3735.95. 960 inch screen shown. £3745.95. 962 inch screen shown. £3755.95. 965 inch screen shown. £3765.95. 968 inch screen shown. £3775.95. 970 inch screen shown. £3785.95. 972 inch screen shown. £3795.95. 975 inch screen shown. £3805.95. 978 inch screen shown. £3815.95. 980 inch screen shown. £3825.95. 982 inch screen shown. £3835.95. 985 inch screen shown. £3845.95. 988 inch screen shown. £3855.95. 990 inch screen shown. £3865.95. 992 inch screen shown. £3875.95. 995 inch screen shown. £3885.95. 998 inch screen shown. £3895.95. 1000 inch screen shown. £3905.95. 1002 inch screen shown. £3915.95. 1005 inch screen shown. £3925.95. 1008 inch screen shown. £3935.95. 1010 inch screen shown. £3945.95. 1012 inch screen shown. £3955.95. 1015 inch screen shown. £3965.95. 1018 inch screen shown. £3975.95. 1020 inch screen shown. £3985.95. 1022 inch screen shown. £3995.95. 1025 inch screen shown. £4005.95. 1028 inch screen shown. £4015.95. 1030 inch screen shown. £4025.95. 1032 inch screen shown. £4035.95. 1035 inch screen shown. £4045.95. 1038 inch screen shown. £4055.95. 1040 inch screen shown. £4065.95. 1042 inch screen shown. £4075.95. 1045 inch screen shown. £4085.95. 1048 inch screen shown. £4095.95. 1050 inch screen shown. £4105.95. 1052 inch screen shown. £4115.95. 1055 inch screen shown. £4125.95. 1058 inch screen shown. £4135.95. 1060 inch screen shown. £4145.95. 1062 inch screen shown. £4155.95. 1065 inch screen shown. £4165.95. 1068 inch screen shown. £4175.95. 1070 inch screen shown. £4185.95. 1072 inch screen shown. £4195.95. 1075 inch screen shown. £4205.95. 1078 inch screen shown. £4215.95. 1080 inch screen shown. £4225.95. 1082 inch screen shown. £4235.95. 1085 inch screen shown. £4245.95. 1088 inch screen shown. £4255.95.



COMMENT

A highly unstable and potentially unwieldy management structure is being created. No company ultimately needs or can live with two chairmen and two chief executives'

British Telecom is marrying on the rebound

It is easy to be sceptical about British Telecom's merger with MCI. Easy, but wrong. To begin with, however, let's look at why this might be a bad thing for BT and its shareholders.

For a start, it looks too much like a deal on the rebound to be taken seriously as the claimed marriage made in heaven. If MCI was the perfect partner all along, what were the talks with Cable & Wireless all about? Just a casual fling? It is hard to resist the impression that BT just wants to do a deal - any deal. This, in other words, is expansion for the sake of it, management aggrandisement and all the other reasons why companies with big balance sheets and money to burn tend to go awry.

Second, the price being paid is plainly a full one, even if the promised special dividend and share buyback go some way to enabling BT shareholders to participate in their company's show of largesse. The claimed eventual cost savings of £500m a year barely justify the premium being paid. Third, it is hard to see what benefits, other than cost savings, BT derives from 100 per cent ownership that it could not have got from its present 20 per cent holding in MCI. The existing level of investment might seem enough for all the international joint ventures and initiatives BT could possibly want.

Fourth, as with any international merger, a highly unstable and potentially unwieldy management structure is being created. No company ultimately needs or can live with

two chairmen and two chief executives, even when its two main businesses happen to be on either side of the Atlantic. The structure proposed by BT is a formula for possibly quite explosive friction.

Fifth, and possibly most important, BT is spending a small fortune expanding in what is fast becoming a commodity service in what is also the world's most competitive telecommunications market. Even the most basic of management textbooks tells you this is about the worst thing you could possibly do.

OK. These are all good reasons for BT to sit on its hands and do nothing. "Long-term strategies," as Lawrence Hayworth, telecoms analyst at Robert Fleming, remarked over the weekend, "do not make for good short-term shareholder value." BT should have been satisfied, the argument runs, with simply paying back vast amounts of its capital to shareholders in the form of special dividends and share buybacks, as so many of its deeply boring and unimaginative peers among the British utilities apparently are. Never mind the fact that the effect thus far has helped to transform them into some of the most hated institutions in the land, undermining the present Government's electoral chances in the process.

Fortunately, however, this is not the way of the world. The business of managing decline obviously has a place in most large organisations, but those that pursue it as a key objective ultimately fail. BT knows about little else outside telecommunications

and related value-added services. What is it supposed to do? Expand into high-margin women's lingerie? Alternatively it might have sat around and awaited the windfall profit tax, or, like British Gas, self-destructed in endless argument with its domestic regulator. Now that shareholders would really have thanked their board for. This is the strategy of despair and rightly BT is having none of it.

BT is proposing to invest its money in a relatively safe enterprise it knows quite a lot about which should, on a five to 10-year view, help put the company at the forefront of developments in one of the world's fastest-growing global businesses. What's so wrong with that?

BT may avoid paying Labour's windfall tax

The fortune BT is spending on MCI is a timely reminder of just what a tempting target it would make for Labour's windfall tax. When it comes to balance sheets, few are as robust as that of BT, as the £5.5bn in cash it is paying out under the MCI deal demonstrates. All this and a 10 per cent share buyback to come.

There is, therefore, no doubt that BT could afford to pay the windfall tax. Whether it actually will depends on how Mr Blair decides to levy it. Even though BT was plainly underpriced and overcapitalised on

privatisation, the company will escape the tax if it is calculated on the arbitrary, random and unfair basis of total shareholder return - currently the favoured option.

Labour might just as well calculate the new tax according to how pay scales inside utility boardrooms compare with the national average, for all the difference it would make. Or what about basing it on the combined height of all the executive directors? Better still, levy it in reverse alphabetic order, starting with Yorkshire Water and United Utilities.

There is no decent way of levying this unfortunate tax. All methods suffer from one flaw or another. But perhaps the least bad way might be to calculate it on the basis simply of market capitalisation, since this would at least penalise all privatised utilities in equal proportion to their ability to pay.

Somebody should have a pop at Greycoat

When you are rescued by the likes of Brian Myerson and Julian Tregler, UK Active Value Fund, as Greycoat was three years ago, you have to expect the subsequent ride to be uncomfortable. For turnaround funds like this, a year is a long time, let alone three; having watched its 10 per cent shareholding go nowhere in that time, the impatience of UK Active with Greycoat's management is understandable.

At 148.5p, Greycoat's shares stand at a discount of getting on for 30 per cent to the underlying value of the properties it owns minus the debt it took on to develop them. With a heavy exposure to the relatively buoyant central London property market, Greycoat really ought to be trading at a smaller discount.

Something is plainly awry. Bad management say Myerson and Tregler, and a radical solution is the only way out - sell all the properties and give the cash back to shareholders who are better equipped to invest it properly.

Bad shareholders, responds Greycoat - our shares have bombed, but what do you expect with the likes of UK Active scaring the horses? Hoisting a "for sale" sign at this stage in the cycle is madness, the company claims. And what becomes of all the tax losses we managed to build up by misreading the last boom and bust?

There's a grain of truth in both arguments. Butting up shareholders with a 50 per cent dividend hike yesterday, Greycoat tacitly agreed that it was overexposed to a couple of giant developments and would have partly to unwind its portfolio over time. By the same token, it is hardly helpful to have a potential seller of 10 per cent of the shares crashing around the share register undermining the incumbent management.

The best solution for all concerned would be if highlighting the value gap tempts someone else to have a pop at the company.

British Biotech shares slump on 'complicated data'

Magnus Grimond

British Biotech's shares slumped 9 per cent yesterday despite test results which the company claimed provided further confirmation of the effectiveness of its Marimastat anti-cancer treatment. The company, whose shares soared a year ago on hopes for Marimastat, said the phase two trials involving 381 cancer sufferers were the most wide-ranging yet and gave further evidence of the drug's ability to restrain the disease across a wide range of cancers. But it was rewarded with a 21.5p slump in the share price to 207.5p yesterday.

James Noble, finance director, said: "It is rather odd that the shares have gone down, because these are by far the most important results we have reported as a company." He ascribed the reaction to the fact that data was "just very, very complicated".

Many analysts, however, downplayed the significance of the results, which for the first

time included information on trials with patients with gastric and colorectal cancers. One analyst said: "Our broad thinking is that the information doesn't really add substantially to what we already know." Questions remained about the dosage regime and the side-effects of the drug, which causes pains in the arm and shoulder when used over a prolonged period.

The data was presented at the European Society for Medical Oncology meeting in Vienna, which brings together cancer specialists from all round Europe. British Biotech said the tests confirmed earlier results that showed higher dosage rates of 10mg, 25mg and 50mg twice a day were more effective than lower ones. The group claimed that the outcomes confirmed there was a connection between a reduction in antigens, used as a marker to monitor the progression of cancer, and a reduction in the disease.

"It is absolutely proved that we can reduce the antigens in a group of 381 patients and

where we reduce the antigens people live longer," Mr Noble said. "We obviously think it is the drug's effect, but we can't prove it as yet."

The results in 14 patients suffering from gastric cancers showed half appearing to respond or showing no further progression of the disease. Despite microscopic evidence that Marimastat was coating tumours in a fibre, as predicted, analysts said the sample size was too small to be significant. Other studies in colorectal, ovarian and pancreatic cancers had shown similar results, Mr Noble said.

Phase three trials under way on Marimastat remain the key to the drug's final approval and launch onto the market, which is unlikely before 1999 or 2000, analysts say. A treatment for pancreatic cancer is likely to be first to market, but external sales forecasts vary widely from \$100m in the first year to \$1bn.

Later this month, the group will give phase three test data for its Lixaphant treatment



Re-inventing a Colossus: Graham Melmoth, new head of the UK's largest Co-Op group

New Co-Op boss prepares for 21st Century

Nigel Cope

The new chief executive of Britain's largest Co-Operative Society said yesterday that a merger of the group's disparate parts remains a possibility as he seeks to steer the 150-year-old Co-Op movement towards the 21st century.

Graham Melmoth, a 57-year-old Londoner, yesterday took control of the Manchester-based Co-Operative Wholesale Society, a huge but poorly understood organisation facing challenging times.

As the most senior executive within Britain's Co-Op, his brief is to modernise the movement, bring its various parts closer together and make it more competitive.

An attempted merger with its smaller counterpart, the Co-Operative Retail Society, failed last year when the two could not agree terms. Many see a merger as essential if the movement is to compete effectively against powerful competitors whose access to stock market capital gives them an advantage.

"I think a merger will happen," Mr Melmoth said. "The

Co-Op has been fragmented but I would like to ensure that the operations of the regions are controlled more centrally."

He wants more emphasis on central management, more investment in its people and more emphasis on strategic planning.

Re-inventing a colossus such as the CWS is a huge task. With annual sales of £3bn, the CWS is the main supplier of goods and services to the individual co-operative retail societies. But it also owns Co-Operative Bank and the Co-Operative Insurance Society. Its high street portfolio includes more than 700 Co-Op shops, 341 travel agents, 346 funeral parlours and a chain of opticians. With 50,000 acres it is the country's biggest farmer.

"My priority is to improve the society's performance. We've got a good spread of assets but I am hoping to get them to perform better," Mr Melmoth said.

His challenge is to fashion a future for a movement which sometimes appears weighed down by its history. Born out of the original Co-Op movement which was started by a group of Rochdale pioneers in 1844, the CWS started life in 1863.

IN BRIEF

• German industrial output fell unexpectedly in September. A fall of 1.8 per cent, the first drop since February, took production to a level 1.5 per cent lower than a year earlier. Both manufacturing and energy output declined during the month. However, the Economics Ministry indicated that the preliminary figure might be revised up substantially. Economists said GDP remained likely to rise by up to 1 per cent in the third quarter after the 1.5 per cent increase in the second quarter.

• The Royal Bank of Scotland subsidiary Citizens Financial Group has agreed to acquire Grove Bank, based in Boston, for \$87m (£53m). Grove, a savings bank, and Greater Boston Bank - which Grove is in the process of acquiring - have assets of \$760m and 10 branches between them. The deal will bring Citizens' branch network in New England to 240.

• Monument Derivatives has bought the research and bond broking business of the London Bond Broking Company from the Birmingham brokers Albert E Sharp. Monument, an equity derivatives broker on Life, said the acquisition of the new team, which includes the City economist Stephen Lewis, would allow it to expand its research and broking services.

• TI Group has said it will not increase its recommended £189m bid for Fortheda, the Swedish polymer group. TI has been put under pressure from a group of rebel shareholders led, by Henderson Investors, to raise its bid.

• Rank Group is to sell Shearings, its coach holidays business, to a management buyout team backed by NatWest Ventures for an undisclosed sum. The business is expected to fetch £50m-£100m.

• British Airways chairman Sir Colin Marshall said implementation of its planned alliance with AMR Corp unit American Airlines could be delayed until after the expiry of its code sharing agreement with US Airways in April 1997. Sir Colin said he was "hopeful" that BA would win US and EU anti-trust approval for its tie-up with AMR Corp unit American Airlines, "but whether we will implement the alliance by 1997 is still to be seen".

• Four bidders have been shortlisted for the proposed privatisation of the Government's loans to UK housing associations. One is a consortium of building societies including Abbey National, Halifax and Nationwide. The others are NatWest Markets and a consortium which includes the Housing Finance Corp, UBS, Barclays and Bank of Scotland. The Principality Mortgage Corporation has applied only for loans held by the Housing of Wales association. The combined loan portfolios have a book value of almost £1bn.

Greycoat fights back with payout pledge

Tom Stevenson City Editor

The acrimonious battle between property developer Greycoat and one of its largest shareholders moved up a gear yesterday with the publication of first-half results and the promise of a 50 per cent dividend rise for the full year.

Greycoat used the issue of its interim figures to call on shareholders to reject a recent demand from Brian Myerson and Julian Tregler's UK Active Value Fund that the company sell all its properties and return the proceeds to shareholders.

Peter Thornton, chief executive of Greycoat, said breaking the company up made no sense for three reasons: it would sac-

rific the inherent growth potential of its central London development sites; it would hang a "closing down sale" sign over the company, reducing the prices it could raise through disposal; and it would incur sizeable penalties for unwinding various financing pledges.

Greycoat's latest row with UK Active, which holds 10 per cent of the company's shares and which has been on the register since a rescue refinancing in 1993, was prompted two weeks ago when Mr Myerson and Mr Tregler called on the company to break itself up as a means of narrowing the widening gap between its share price and the underlying value of its assets.

The gap between the value

the market attributes to Greycoat's shares and the value of the properties it owns minus its debts is wider than for most of its peers. UK Active Value puts that down to poor management; the company blames concerns over the presence of a disgruntled shareholder on the register.

The move by UK Active Value has been widely seen as an attempt to highlight the value gap and flush out a possible bidder for the company rather than necessarily a genuine call for a break-up of the company. It is thought a number of property companies would be interested in buying Greycoat with perhaps three years of the current property cycle upturn remaining.

Announcing a 123 per cent

rise in interim pre-tax profits from £1.7m to £3.8m, Greycoat promised a full-year dividend of 1.2p, a 50 per cent increase on last year's 0.8p payout. That in turn represented a 33 per cent rise over the previous year's dividend. The company does not pay an interim dividend.

UK Active Value responded to Greycoat's figures with a further condemnation of the company's record: "This is yet again more hollow promises of value to come. Shareholders should ask how the promised value will be delivered."

"It is three years since Greycoat was rescued by UKAV and in that time the company has failed to convince the market that it has a clear strategy for growth."



Peter Thornton: Fighting move to break up Greycoat

T&N gets asbestos reprieve

Magnus Grimond

T&N, the auto components maker, was yesterday given a temporary reprieve from a ruling which could have reopened hundreds of millions of dollars in lawsuits resulting from its past life as an asbestos company.

Even so, the shares slumped 4.5p to 129p as the group warned less buoyant markets and destocking were hitting margins in pistons, friction products and gaskets. It was "particularly difficult to assess the final outcome of the year's results", T&N said.

The stay on asbestosis lawsuits came as the US Supreme Court agreed to review a ruling by the Philadelphia third circuit which earlier this year decertified the so-called Georgine system agreed in 1994 for settling claims out of court. As a result of the Supreme Court's intervention, the Georgine procedure will continue to operate while the court review is in progress.

T&N said it expected asbestos litigation charges would continue to be incurred in line with previous estimates of around £25m for the second half of 1996. If the Supreme Court had rejected the request, Georgine would have been formally ended 21 days after the judgement.

Alliance & Leicester investors seek meeting

Investors angry at the terms of the Alliance & Leicester's £2.8bn conversion from a building society to a bank are demanding a special meeting with its directors ahead of the vote to approve conversion, which is due to be held in the London Arena on 10 December.

The Alliance & Leicester has decided to treat all its 2.4 million savers and borrowers the same when it comes to the pay-out of shares.

They will each get 250 shares worth at least £1,000 -

a move that has upset some customers who have large sums invested or who have been with the society for many years.

Patrick Mountain, 63, of Somerset, Somerset, a retired businessman and a former agent of the society, said he had received dozens of phone calls.

He is urging people who are angry to write protest letters warning they will withdraw all their savings, except for the amount needed to qualify for the shares.

"I would think there are probably several hundred thousand people who are feeling bitterly aggrieved," said Mr Mountain.

"They are being treated just the same as carpal tunnel who opened accounts just before the decision to convert was announced."

In a statement, the Alliance & Leicester said it had opted for the share distribution scheme "only after careful consideration of all the possible options".

It said: "We believe our

chosen scheme is the fairest and most appropriate for the vast majority of our members and reflects the traditions of the society's mutual past."

A spokeswoman said the society was sorry that what it believed was a minority of members were disappointed.

More than 70 per cent of its investors have less than £2,000 in their accounts and the society believes they will be "very happy" with the choice of scheme.

Asked if possible action by customers posed any threat,

she added: "We don't believe so at the moment."

Meanwhile the two co-founders of the Halifax Action Group, Serge Laurie and Peter Judge, said they would again stand for election to the Halifax board and claimed the conversion process was "taking far too long". The Halifax, which has 9 million customers, is set to become a bank in June 1997.

Details of the flotation were announced two years ago and it is anticipated that borrowers and savers will receive an average of £1,000 each.

PLAYING FAVOURITES
SATURDAY & SUNDAY MIDDAY



WATCH AS CLARE GROGAN UNRAVELS THE MYSTERY OF POP STARS' FAVOURITE MUSIC VIDEOS.

VH-1
MUSIC THAT MEANS SOMETHING

available via cable and satellite

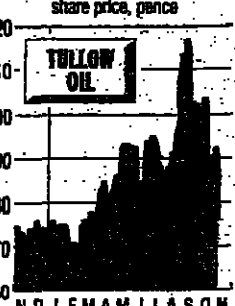
هكذا من الأصل

market report / shares

DATA BANK

FTSE 100
3928.1 - 20.4
FTSE 250
4418.4 - 10.8
FTSE 350
1962.4 - 9.0
SEAQ VOLUME
648.8m shares,
40,351 bargains
Gilt Index
93.37 - 0.29

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Busy BT prevents rout as interest rate gloom emerges

BT prevented a Foolsie rout. The proposed £1.3bn deal with US group MCI helped the telecom giant ring up the day's best blue chip gain and encouraged other telephone shares. Foolsie ended 20.4 points down at 3,928.1 after an early 7.7 advance.

At one time BT was up 33p to 384p. But for the sixth time in a year the charge faltered in the 380ps and the shares ended with a 22p gain to 372p.

In turnover terms BT was also the dominant force.

Seaq put volume at 82.4 million shares out of an uninspiring stock market total of 648.8 million.

Vodafone, moving ahead last week on demerger and AT&T bid hopes, improved 5p to 241p and Orange edged up 1.5p to 185.5p. But Cable and Wireless, which rejected the BT embrace earlier this year, fell 6p to 483.5p.

BSkyB was also unsettled by

the planned transatlantic deal. It fell 22p to 547p on thoughts about the powerful challenges the giant new grouping could represent and MCI's 13.5 per cent stake in Rupert Murdoch's News International which is using its BSkyB shares in a £1bn cash-raising exercise. Details of the Murdoch cash scheme are about to be completed.

The satellite television station has presented a poor picture since it hit a peak of 697p last month.

The US presidential elections, the lowering of the Government's majority to just one, talk of interest rate increases in the new year and the strong pound prompted blue chips to back-pedal. Reports of a US missile attack on an Iraqi air defence site was another inhibiting influence.

Oils remain weak with Tullow Oil down 8p to 70p. The shares have come back from



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

118p since it reported disappointing drilling results in Pakistan.

Electricities managed a few modest gains as bid hopes continued to flicker. East Midlands Electricity put on 5.5p to 550p. The communication sector remained on bid alert with Carlton Communications, unchanged at 491p, said to be preparing to strike with a few traders, to the surprise of the majority, pointing to Yorkshire-Tyne lies as its most likely target.

British Biotech's keenly awaited research update was less encouraging than many had hoped and the shares fell 21.5p to 207.5p.

Kwik Save, figures on Thursday, remained depressed with a 17p fall to 302p. Shoprite, reporting interim profits of £958,000, fell 1.5p to 18p.

Kingfisher surrendered 11p to 635p on worries it is about to unleash another French strike - taking over a do-it-yourself operation.

Chelsea Village, the football club, had an eventful session with the price at one time nudging 120p. The shares closed at 113.5p, up 16p. Suggestions that the death of vice-chairman Matthew Harding could lead to takeover action, with even legendary trader George Soros being men-

tioned as a possible predator, created the excitement. Granada was another name in the frame. Manchester Utd, conquered by Chelsea over the weekend, had to sacrifice another 13.5p to 515p.

Wellman, the engineer hit last week by a profits warning, managed a modest rally, up 2p to 33.5p. There are suggestions the fall - from 49p - has been overdone. It would appear profits this year could emerge at a reasonable £8m which has prompted one stockbroker, thought to be James Capel, to put a 42p price tag on the shares.

There is also talk the fall could encourage predatory interest with F&I, down 2.5p to 206.6p, the name in the frame. Property group Burford was little changed at 136.5p as chief executive Nick Leslau cashed in options, raising more than £5m. Barclay de Zoete Wedd placed the shares at

135p. Jacques Vert, the clothing group with the distinction of producing three profit warnings in a year, rose 3.5p to 37.5p as John Shannon picked up a 5.74 per cent interest.

The shares are thought to have, indirectly, come from Fidelity, the US investment house.

Mr Shannon is a former chairman and chief executive of Country Casuals, the fashion retailer he returned to haunt with a fierce but ultimately unsuccessful takeover bid a year ago.

Honeyuckle, a fashion wear group, remained suspended at 39.5p. There is a belief retailer Philip Green is interested in buying into the company.

Volume was turned down at Verity, which has soared since developing a water-thin sound system.

The shares fell 8.25p to 32.25p following adverse week-end comment.

TAKING STOCK

Expect action from Jacobs Holdings, the transport group being developed by Michael Kingshott. It is thought to be near to announcing a substantial acquisition. The shares were little changed at 72.5p.

Anstis Friars, the stockbroker, is emerging as a leading player on the fringe Oxfex share market. Today it will launch the flotation of a restaurant company called Posh People. It already has five firms traded on Oxfex.

Lanka Trust, the former New Guernsey Securities Trust set for an exciting run under Andrew Regan, is thought to have its eyes on buying the NAAFI, the military support service. Dealings started in the new firm-like shares they moved up to 16p to 207.5p.

Alcoholic Beverages

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Banks, Merchant

Company	Price	Change
Barclays	10.00	0.00
HSBC	10.00	0.00
London	10.00	0.00
M&P	10.00	0.00
NatWest	10.00	0.00
Paragon	10.00	0.00
Prudential	10.00	0.00
TSB	10.00	0.00
Windsor	10.00	0.00

Banks, Retail

Company	Price	Change
Bank of Scotland	10.00	0.00
Bank of Ireland	10.00	0.00
Bank of London	10.00	0.00
Bank of Montreal	10.00	0.00
Bank of New York	10.00	0.00
Bank of Paris	10.00	0.00
Bank of Spain	10.00	0.00
Bank of Tokyo	10.00	0.00
Bank of West	10.00	0.00

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Building Construction

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Building Materials

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Chemicals

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Distributors

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Diversified Industries

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Engineering Vehicles

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Extractive Industries

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Food Manufacturers

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Health Care

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Household Goods

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Investment Companies

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Investment Trusts

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Leisure & Hotels

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Media

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Pharmaceuticals

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Printing & Paper

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Property

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Retailers, Food

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00
Tullow	10.00	0.00
Vodafone	10.00	0.00
Wellman	10.00	0.00
Whitbread	10.00	0.00

Retailers, General

Company	Price	Change
Adnoca	10.00	0.00
Beck's	10.00	0.00
Carlsberg	10.00	0.00
Heineken	10.00	0.00
Kaiser	10.00	0.00
Miller	10.00	0.00
Stout	10.00	0.00

sport

Difficult art makes bigger splash

'Synchro' is no longer the laughing stock of sport, says Mike Rowbottom

The code of behaviour at Wigan's International pool was violated at the weekend. While those in the water refrained as requested from running, petting, bombing, shoving, pushing, ducking, spitting and smoking - at least as far as one could judge - the ban on acrobatics was flagrantly disregarded.

With more athletic endeavour than ever before, 101 competitors in what was the 22nd National Synchronised Swimming Championships went through their unlikely motions, watched by a small but knowledgeable audience.

It is 12 years since the sport bobbed into the public consciousness at the 1984 Olympics. Its peculiar combination of strenuous activity and a fixed grin quickly established it as a target for ridicule. Carolyn Wilson, one of the two British competitors in Los Angeles, remembers very clearly the reaction in media circles at the time.

"We got some quite negative publicity from people like Des Lynam," she recalled. "That is the risk run by all sports with an artistic element. People have an opinion about it."

"We are used to seeing sport in terms of men grovelling about on the rugby field, but sport shouldn't just be about sweating and grimacing. It can also be about people enjoying themselves."

Sweating and grimacing will never have a place in the world of synchro, but those who run the sport have been smart enough to realise sequins and smiles is also a losing combination in the long term.

In an effort to counteract the sport's glamorous excesses and absurdities, the emphasis has been shifted towards technical expertise, which now carries 60 per cent of marks in competition, leaving artistic impression as the lesser element.

The sport as a whole now reacts to sequins like Dracula to a crucifix. Costumes must be of a minimum size after the embarrassments of the late Eighties. And as for the smiling, let Andrea Holland, a former European champion who coached Britain's 1992 Olympic team, explain it.

"All that started because this



The judges watch a competitor go through her paces at the National Synchronised Swimming Championships in Wigan. Photograph: Robert Hallam

is a sport that you have to try and make look easy, so people would smile to impress the judges. Nowadays, however, judges are better informed and know what technical aspects to look for.

"And if the routine is set to serious music, then the expressions have to reflect that. We don't want smiling all the time," she said.

The sport has also acted to discourage freakish displays of breath-holding, another time-honoured tactic to impress the judges. Such tactics were leading to instances of girls blacking out - on one occasion, in Sweden, a competitor died after hyperventilating.

In tandem with these changes,

there has been an increasing awareness of the need for proper endurance training. Here is a typical day at training camp for Britain's elite performers, as described by Ann Webb, one of the British coaches:

"Three-mile run before breakfast. Then 200 stand-ups on chairs to warm up. Then three hours working in the pool. Lunch. Three more hours swimming. Then a one and a half hour walk-through [of the movements]."

One of those regularly putting in that kind of training session is Adele Carlsen, a 20-year-old member of the Farnborough-based Rushmoor Royals, who retained their team title at the weekend and

recently featured on the television show *How Do They Do That?*

The knee-jerk reaction to her sport which she often encounters is something which clearly annoys her.

"When I have been training for nine hours in a freezing cold pool, pushing myself to the limits, and someone comes up to me and says what I do is stupid, that it's just a matter of smiling, sticking my legs in the air and splashing around in the water, then it does make me angry," she said.

The routine which Carlsen and her colleagues went through - a celebration of the Atlanta Games, with elements representing running, javelin

throwing and high jumping - was faintly ironic, given that Britain missed out on qualifying for the team competition, which is now the sole Olympic event, by one place.

For a sport which, in terms of public profile, slips beneath the surface between Olympics, such a failure can be costly. Carlsen, for instance, had to be funded directly by the Amateur Swimming Association this year after her Sports Aid Foundation grant was discontinued. "When we failed to reach the Olympics, they didn't want to know," she said.

"I don't think the Government in this country takes sport that seriously," she added. "They think that we are still in

the 1930s, and that Britain can just turn up and win off an hour a day's training. But so much has changed in this sport in the last 10 years. To do it properly, you have to be full-time."

It is a familiar situation, replicated in almost any sport you care to name in this country. But the continuing international popularity of synchronised swimming - it has been the first sport to sell out at each of the last three Olympics - is likely to provide the necessary stimulus to the domestic scene, if only every four years.

In the meantime, the 23rd National Synchronised Swimming Championships are in need of a sponsor...

Julian steals Lara's glory

Cricket

Brian Lara was upstaged by a savage display of power hitting from the Surrey and former Australian pace bowler Brendon Julian as the West Indies lost their opening tour match yesterday to the Australian Cricket Board Chairman's XI.

Lara opened his account in Australia with a fluent 66 in the West Indies' total of 256 for 9 from their 50 overs but it was not enough to prevent them from slipping to a three-wicket defeat at Lilac Hill, Perth.

It was an embarrassing result for the West Indies against a side fielding three retired Test fast bowlers in the West Indian Michael Holding and Australia's Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson.

After reducing the Chairman's XI to 95 for 6 in the 25th over, the West Indies appeared poised for a comfortable victory. But Julian transformed the match by smashing six sixes and seven fours in an unbeat-

en 96 from only 52 balls to sweep his side to victory at 258 for 7 with eight overs to spare. Julian was denied a century when his partner, Thomson, hit the winning runs.

The Worcestershire captain and former Australian Test batsman Tom Moody contributed a responsible 66 as the pair added 148 in 15 overs for the seventh wicket. They were particularly harsh on the off-spin of Carl Hooper and the slow left-arm bowling of Jimmy Adams, who between them conceded 79 runs in eight overs.

The fast bowler Ian Bishop took 4 for 44, which included the wicket of the former Australian captain Allan Border for seven, but he lacked support.

West Indies play Western Australia in Perth later this week in one-day and three-day matches as part of their preparations for the first Test in Brisbane, starting on 22 November. **YOUR MATCH** A. H. Hill, Perth: West Indies 256 for 9 (B. Lara 66, R. Sarwan 31, N. Holdsworth 21, B. Julian 2-53, Australian Cricket Board Chairman's XI 258 for 7 (B. Julian 96, J. Thomson 66, I. Bishop 4-44). Chairmen's XI won by 3 wickets.

Cardiff work extra hard for victories

Ice hockey

STEVE PINDER

Cardiff needed overtime to win both their Superleague matches at the weekend. Against Nottingham, both sides had players suspended after last month's ill-tempered meeting between them and both seemed cagey, doubtless aware that anything more than minor penalties would incur the league's wrath.

The game was level 2-2 at the end of the third period. Nottingham dominated in overtime but, on Cardiff's first real attack, with just a minute left, Ivan Manulic scored the winner.

The following day, against Newcastle, Cardiff were again taken to overtime. This time Ian Cooper scored the winner.

Newcastle's other game, against Sheffield, also went to sudden-death. Newcastle pulled their netminder in the third period and came back from 2-0 down. Neither team could score during overtime and the game finished a tie.

Blalock flies in to give Eagles a lift

Basketball

RICHARD TAYLOR

The merry-go-round of Americans flying in and out of Newcastle League clubs takes another turn tomorrow when Ralph Blalock goes straight from airport to basketball court, to make his debut for Newcastle Eagles against Manchester Giants in the 7-Up Trophy.

Eagles, part of Sir John Hall's stable of sports clubs at Newcastle, have nosedived after winning the first four games of the season. Saturday's 102-70 National Cup win over First Division Ware Rebels ended a three-game losing streak.

Blalock, a 6ft 5in 22-year-old posted impressive statistics at Lawson State University and led the team in scoring and three-pointers in his final year.

Blalock's arrival means Newcastle have released another American, Anthony Joseph, who has been snapped up by Crystal Palace, who tried to sign him at the start of the season.

RACING RESULTS

NEWCASTLE

1.25C: 1. SILENT GUEST (R. Gentry) 3-1; 2. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 3. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 4. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 5. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 6. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 7. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 8. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 9. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 10. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 11. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 12. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 13. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 14. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 15. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 16. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 17. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 18. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 19. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 20. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 21. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 22. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 23. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 24. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 25. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 26. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 27. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 28. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 29. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 30. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 31. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 32. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 33. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 34. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 35. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 36. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 37. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 38. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 39. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 40. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 41. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 42. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 43. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 44. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 45. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 46. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 47. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 48. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 49. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 50. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 51. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 52. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 53. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 54. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 55. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 56. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 57. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 58. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 59. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 60. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 61. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 62. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 63. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 64. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 65. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 66. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 67. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 68. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 69. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 70. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 71. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 72. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 73. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 74. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 75. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 76. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 77. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 78. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 79. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 80. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 81. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 82. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 83. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 84. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 85. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 86. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 87. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 88. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 89. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 90. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 91. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 92. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 93. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 94. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 95. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 96. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 97. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 98. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 99. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 100. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 101. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 102. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 103. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 104. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 105. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 106. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 107. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 108. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 109. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 110. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 111. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 112. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 113. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 114. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 115. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 116. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 117. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 118. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 119. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 120. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 121. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 122. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 123. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 124. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 125. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 126. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 127. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 128. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 129. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 130. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 131. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 132. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 133. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 134. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 135. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 136. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 137. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 138. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 139. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 140. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 141. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 142. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 143. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 144. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 145. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 146. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 147. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 148. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 149. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 150. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 151. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 152. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 153. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 154. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 155. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 156. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 157. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 158. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 159. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 160. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 161. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 162. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 163. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 164. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 165. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 166. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 167. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 168. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 169. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 170. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 171. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 172. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 173. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 174. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 175. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 176. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 177. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 178. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 179. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 180. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 181. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 182. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 183. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 184. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 185. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 186. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 187. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 188. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 189. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 190. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 191. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 192. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 193. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 194. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 195. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 196. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 197. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 198. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 199. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 200. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 201. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 202. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 203. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 204. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 205. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 206. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 207. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 208. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 209. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 210. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 211. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 212. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 213. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 214. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 215. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 216. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 217. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 218. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 219. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 220. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 221. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 222. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 223. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 224. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 225. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 226. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 227. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 228. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 229. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 230. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 231. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 232. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 233. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 234. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 235. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 236. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 237. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 238. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 239. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 240. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 241. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 242. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 243. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 244. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 245. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 246. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 247. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 248. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 249. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 250. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 251. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 252. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 253. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 254. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 255. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 256. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 257. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 258. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 259. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 260. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 261. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 262. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 263. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 264. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 265. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 266. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 267. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 268. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 269. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 270. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 271. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 272. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 273. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 274. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 275. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 276. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 277. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 278. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 279. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 280. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 281. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 282. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 283. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 284. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 285. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 286. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 287. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 288. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 289. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 290. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 291. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 292. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 293. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 294. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 295. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 296. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 297. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 298. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 299. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 300. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 301. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 302. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 303. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 304. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 305. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 306. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 307. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 308. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 309. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 310. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 311. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 312. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 313. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 314. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 315. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 316. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 317. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 318. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 319. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 320. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 321. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 322. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 323. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 324. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 325. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 326. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 327. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 328. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 329. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 330. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 331. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 332. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 333. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 334. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 335. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 336. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 337. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 338. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 339. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 340. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 341. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 342. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 343. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 344. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 345. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 346. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 347. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 348. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 349. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 350. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 351. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 352. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 353. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 354. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 355. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 356. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 357. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 358. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 359. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 360. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 361. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 362. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 363. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 364. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 365. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 366. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 367. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 368. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 369. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 370. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 371. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 372. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 373. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 374. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 375. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 376. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 377. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 378. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 379. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 380. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 381. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 382. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 383. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 384. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 385. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 386. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 387. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 388. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 389. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 390. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 391. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 392. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 393. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 394. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 395. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 396. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 397. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 398. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 399. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 400. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 401. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 402. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 403. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 404. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 405. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 406. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 407. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 408. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 409. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 410. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 411. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 412. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 413. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 414. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 415. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 416. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 417. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 418. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 419. The Bunting Belf 5-4 (R. Gentry); 4

sport

He does not want to clutter up the England squad with players who are superior to those he has nurtured over the years

One of the most striking aspects of what is already a remarkable season is the impact which rugby league players have made. Sometimes they are players who have re-transferred their allegiance, such as Scott Quinnell of Richmond (as he hopes will turn out to be the case permanently) Va'aiga Tuigamala of Waspas. Sometimes they are performers who had never played until regularly before this season and will shortly return to league, such as Gary Connolly of Harlequins. They have always transformed their club's play for the better.

There has been a curious reluctance to acknowledge this truth. After the first Wigan-Bath match in the summer, followers of union said that

of course Wigan beat Bath at league. It was only to be expected. But Bath would beat Wigan at union, although maybe not so comprehensively.

Wigan's triumph in the Middlesex Sevens caused some people to revise their forecast, and to admit that perhaps Wigan might beat Bath after all at Twickenham. Superficially, however, things turned out as had been expected originally, with Bath winning and Wigan showing an unexpected ineptitude in the set-pieces, particularly the scrums.

But the superiority of the Wigan players individually, the backs at any rate, became evident in the second half and even more clear in the last quarter. The league players were

stronger, faster, fitter and, above all, more creative. Jason Robinson could sidestep, swerve or jink round not just one opponent but several — an art some of us thought had gone with Gerald Davies.

This season, Robinson has been delighting the crowds at Bath, playing first on the wing and, more recently, at full-back. So has the other former Wigan player Henry Paul at centre. Both he and his brother, Robbie of Harlequins, are ineligible to play for England because they are New Zealanders. The same goes for Tuigamala.

But of eligible former league players, Jack Rowell, the England coach, has recalled only Jim Fallon of Richmond to the national squad.



ALAN WATKINS

In my opinion, Jon Bentley of Newcastle, formerly of Halifax RL and before that of Sale (where, in 1988, he won three England caps), is at least as good a wing. On present form, Robinson, who is much

younger, is the clear superior of both. So far, Martin Offiah of Bedford has not set the fields alight and has been troubled by a mysterious toe injury. Nevertheless, I have little doubt about the composition of the strongest English three-quarter line: Robinson, Connolly, Will Carling and Offiah.

Offiah has already said he is free to play for England. There may be doubts about how free Robinson is. Certainly Connolly is due to go back north in the new year. But if Wigan will release him, there is no legal reason why he should not play for England in the Five Nations. Why does not Rowell try to exercise his persuasive skills, for which he is apparently well known?

The answer, I am afraid, is that he does not want to. He does not want to clutter up his precious squad with players who are manifestly superior to those he has nurtured over the years. I agree — the advent of Robinson, Connolly and Offiah would undoubtedly be hard on Jon Sleightholme, Jeremy Guscott, Phil de Glanville, Tony Underwood and Adebayo Adebayo. But life is full of such hardships. They are not on that account injustices.

Kevin Bowring of Wales does not have this luxury of talent at his disposal. He should welcome the former league players. Yet he also is approaching them with the apprehension of an old man confronted by a nubile bride. So far, only Scott

Gibbs of Swansea has been fully readmitted to the fold, with David Young of Cardiff and Richard Webster of Bath hovering on the fringes.

It is evident that Wales' best centre combination is Gibbs with Allan Bateman, who is playing brilliantly for Richmond, outside him. Scott Quinnell of the same club will presumably be back at No 8 once his payment problems have been settled.

The best Welsh back line would then be: Gareth Llewellyn (Harlequins), Craig Quinnell (Richmond), Paul Moriarty (Swansea), Scott Quinnell (Richmond), Richard Webster (Bath). Bowring, the victim of Welsh parochialism as much as of anti-league prejudice, is even less likely than Rowell to do the right thing.

Rowell and the men who would be king

Chris Hewett on the problems facing the England coach, who names his new captain today

Jack Rowell is on his Jack Jones, so to speak. Two and a half years after inheriting a solid, functional and generally successful national side from his predecessor, Geoff Cooke, the England coach now finds himself in the uncomfortable position of having to back his own judgement on the most exposed selection issue of the all: the captaincy.

What is more, he must make some shrewd decisions on the shape of his side for the Five Nations' Championship while keeping one eye on the 1999 World Cup. Rowell went to the 1995 tournament in South Africa with Cooke's legacy almost completely intact and while he moved gingerly into reshape and remodel mode last season, he still had to pull an old nag by the name of Dean Richards out of the knacker's yard to save the day at Murrayfield. When he looks down from the high wire this time, that particular safety net will be conspicuous by its absence.

The new leader is due to be named at Twickenham today and the job description has changed almost completely since Cooke appointed Will Carling in 1988. Indeed, Carling transformed it himself through his curious mix of undeniable glamour, naked ambition and almost laughable naïveté. You do not hob-nob with royalty and make public jokes about the flatulent habits of faintly ridiculous but still influential people and then hope that the front pages will leave you alone.

Assuming that Rowell has decided against appointing a stop-gap captain — and 1999 is far enough away to invalidate the need for one — he must not only choose a partner with whom he feels he can work and who can handle the post-Carling pressures but one capable of bridging the gap between the selectors and the squad. That gap was allowed to grow dangerously wide at times last season as Carling distanced himself from his coach, and now that Rowell is in a position to name his own man, he had better get it right.

Lawrence Dallaglio has been the front-runner since Carling stepped down after victory over the Irish last March. Confident, approachable and highly capable in all three back-row positions, he forged his leadership skills on the hoof by substituting a Wasp side that was on

READY TO FILL CARLING'S BOOTS: LEADING CONTENDERS FOR THE ENGLAND CAPTAINCY



Lawrence Dallaglio

Age: 24; Club: Wasps; Caps: 6. Red-hot favourite for the succession since Will Carling bowed out last spring, Dallaglio is the youngest of the obvious contenders but his versatility as a player, combined with a measured approach off the field, persuaded Jack Rowell to describe him as the "English François Pienaar". The best long-term option.



Jason Leonard

Age: 28; Club: Harlequins; Caps: 49. Hugely popular prop forward who, like Dallaglio, gives the England selectors elbow room through an ability to play in more than one position. Leonard has made more international appearances than all his main rivals put together and his success in bonding a disparate Quins side this season makes him a decent outside threat.



Phil de Glanville

Age: 28; Club: Bath; Caps: 16. Obvious captaincy material from the day he joined Bath from college in 1990, de Glanville fits precisely into the traditional mould of an England skipper. He has a far harder edge than many imagine, but the resurgent form of both Carling and his own club-mate, Jeremy Guscott, leaves him vulnerable on the selection front.



Tim Rodber

Age: 27; Club: Northampton; Caps: 25. There was a time when Rodber's army background and fierce patriotic fervour persuaded many to stamp him with the Future England Captain label. Then came his sending off in Port Elizabeth in 1994 — he was only the second man to be dismissed while wearing the national jersey — and he is still making up the lost ground.

the point of collapse in the aftermath of Rob Andrew's acrimonious departure for Newcastle.

In truth, Dallaglio has not enjoyed the best of months. After a bright enough start to the campaign he picked and lost arguments with referees during the defeats by Gloucester and Cardiff and then found himself on the wrong end of an embarrassing pasting in Limerick as Munster effectively ended Wasps' interest in the European Cup.

Since then, though, the Londoners have worked themselves back up to speed and if Rowell

really did make up his mind on the captaincy back in September, as he insists, then England may well have a half-Italian skipper by this afternoon.

The blindingly obvious does not always appeal to a man of Rowell's paradoxical character, however, hence the presence of one or two dark horses in the stalls. The word on the street alternated between Phil de Glanville, the Bath captain, and Tim Rodber, his counterpart at Northampton, before coming up with a wholly new suggestion in the shape of Jason Leonard, the most popular forward in the current

squad as well as the most experienced.

Once Rowell has gone public on his choice, he then has to find himself a side. If that sounds harsh in the light of England's Five Nations victory last season, a glance at the all-important spine of the team confirms the sentiment. All five central positions are up for grabs, from full-back through the half-backs and hooker to No 8, and if anyone tells Big Jack that competition for places is what coaches are supposed to yearn for, he might well get a thick ear.

While he steers well clear of

entering into a public debate on the matter, Rowell is deeply concerned about a number of key positions outside the scrum. Tim Stimpson of Newcastle is within touching distance of a debut at full-back against Italy on 23 November but, much to the England hierarchy's disgust, his goal-kicking opportunities at club level have been seriously restricted by Andrew. That makes it awkward for Rowell to select the non-kicking Mike Catt at stand-off, even though his running skills would be in perfect harmony with a dynamic three-quarter line almost soaked in pace.

England are better placed at scrum-half, especially now that the supremely arrogant Austin Healey is finding his feet at Leicester and proving himself a worthy contender alongside Kyran Bracken, Andy Gommarsall and the incumbent, Matt Dawson. But there is a decision to be made at hooker, where Mark Regan is struggling both with injury and with the brilliant Gloucester prospect Phil Greening. And that No 8? Nightmare. Rodber can draw on the experience of 25 caps but has shown nothing to suggest that he is playing better than Chris Steasby, Tony Diprose or

Steve Ojomoh, whose European Cup performance against Dax 10 days ago was nothing short of world class. All this and Ben Clarke too.

Elsewhere, the options are more straightforward. Jon Sleightholme and Adebayo Adebayo are expected to form a Bath partnership on the wings with Tony Underwood applying pressure on both. Carling should resume his midfield partnership with Jeremy Guscott; Graham Rowntree and Leonard can expect to stay in the front row despite the best efforts of Leicester's Darren Garforth, and if Rowell de-

cides that Garath Archer's discipline has taken him beyond the pale, Simon Shaw of Bristol will probably partner Martin Johnson at lock.

But whereas John Hart can reel off his New Zealand spine with his eyes shut — Cullen, Mehrtens, Marshall, Fitzpatrick, Brooke, end of story — Rowell must perm five from the best part of 20 in an effort to give England a new backbone. Until he settles on that quintet, his side will continue to look seriously vulnerable both in the European theatre and, more importantly, on the world stage.

Andrew's threat ensures postponement

Rob Andrew was not exactly renowned for his gambler's instinct during the decade he spent in the England team, but he has acquired a mean line in pink and white since falling under the influence of Sir John Hall at Newcastle, writes Chris Hewett. Yesterday his latest venture into the risk business paid heavily dividends when his club's fixture with Rotherham was postponed from this weekend until March.

Andrew had threatened to withdraw six of his players from international and representative duty this weekend after Rotherham insisted that the League

Two match between the two sides should go ahead as planned on Saturday.

With two Newcastle players, Gary Armstrong and Doddie Weir, in the Scotland squad for the Test with Australia, two more in the A squad who face the Junior Springboks on Friday, and another couple required for an Irish session in advance of the match with Western Samoa next Tuesday, Andrew forced the situation by pulling rank.

That led to some hurried discussions at national level and, according to a spokesman for the English professional clubs or-

ganisation (Epruc), the debate went all the way to the International Board, who sanctioned a fixture deferment. It now seems likely that Newcastle's home game with Richmond, the other favourites for promotion to League One, will be shifted from its current 18 January date because players from both sides are likely to be involved in the opening round of the Five Nations' Championship.

Meanwhile, Epruc officials will meet tomorrow to discuss setting up a fund for members most at risk from the bank manager. The political stand-off

between Epruc and the Rugby Football Union has delayed the signing of a multi-million pound broadcasting deal with BSkyB and has left several of the more vulnerable clubs staring into a financial black hole. Representatives from the richer outfits — Newcastle, Harlequins, Bath and Richmond among them — are likely to be asked to bail out the smaller fry with loans of up to £200,000.

Rory Jenkins, the uncapped Harlequins flanker, has been called into the England squad for tomorrow's training session at Bisham Abbey.

Wasps' need means Reed misses out

Andy Reed, the Scotland and Lions lock, yesterday became the latest casualty of the club versus country issue. The Wasps forward was originally named in the squad for the Scotland A match against South Africa A at Hawick on Friday night but is needed for his club's Anglo-Welsh League game at Pontypridd tomorrow and was not able to attend the training sessions.

Doug Morgan, the Scotland A team manager, announcing a squad of 21 for Friday's match, said: "We picked Reed initially in our squad but Wasps re-

quired him for their match on Wednesday night. I felt that this was not the ideal preparation for a Scotland A game. Proper preparation is vital and that means players attending squad sessions."

George Graham will miss the Scotland A game through injury. The former rugby league forward was selected to play against Australia last Wednesday but had to withdraw because of a calf injury.

The Scotland A squad shows several changes to the 21 on duty at Galashiels last Wednesday for the Australians' open-

ing tour match in Scotland. The significant newcomer among the backs is the wing James Craig, while also in the squad is Watsonians full-back Derrick Lee.

In the forwards, there is promotion for locks Stuart Grimes and Scott Aitken, who have performed well in Heineken European Cup matches this season, and there is a recall for the capped prop John Manson, who was out of action earlier this season through injury.

Injury-hit Australia will field tour replacement Tim Gavin

and their trainer in the side to play the Scotland Districts Select XV at McDiarmid Park in Perth today.

Gavin, the Wallaby back-row player has been summoned following injuries to both No 8s Mike Briar and Mark Connors.

But Gavin, normally a No 8, will pack down in the second row alongside John Welborn or Warwick Waugh. Dirk Williams, the tourists' 35-year-old trainer, has been drafted in to play at blind-side flanker.

Scotland A squad, Scotland Districts team, Digest, page 25

LOOK BACK IN ANGORA

TUESDAY TO FRIDAY 10PM.



VH-1

MUSIC THAT MEANS SOMETHING

BOB MILLS' MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY. WATCH 25 YEARS OF BAD HAIR, STRANGE SHIRTS AND GREAT MUSIC VIDEOS.

available via cable and satellite

صحنه من الراحل

THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN JUST STICKING YOUR LEGS IN THE AIR

Mike Rowbottom on the lament of the spectators

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL: Troubled England midfielder reveals 'the rage inside' that has driven him to seek counselling

Gascoigne enters the confessional

GLENN MOORE
Football Correspondent

Paul Gascoigne faced a few more of his demons yesterday: 20 newspaper reporters, two radio stations, and more television channels than most people can receive.

A confessional press conference after England's first day of training for Saturday's World Cup tie in Georgia was another small step on Gascoigne's road to redemption.

It followed a backwards move at the weekend, when Gascoigne lost much of the residual sympathy there is for him by "looking deep into his tortured soul" exclusively for the *News of the World*. There was, the newspaper announced, no fee - yet neither was there any mention of a contribution to charities supporting battered wives' refuges.

Representatives of the 40 million-plus Britons who do not read the Sunday tabloid were told yesterday that Gascoigne regretted "the thing that happened with my wife". He regretted "it" five times, but he could not quite bring himself to use the words "wife-beating".

Glenn Hoddle could, stung by suggestions that by picking Gascoigne he had condoned the practice, he responded: "This does not send a message out that I am backing wife-beaters, that I condone everything he has done. I am trying to ensure he never does it again."

The England coach "rode shotgun" alongside Gascoigne in Bisham Abbey's wood-panelled Elizabethan Room yesterday. Portraits of Charles II and his Portuguese wife, Catherine of Braganza, stared down from the walls flanked by the phalanx of TV crews.

Gascoigne looked stern when he entered, but gradually relaxed, even slipping in a couple of his deadpan jokes by the end of the 30-minute session.

"It has been a shaky weekend, but I'm pleased to be back in the squad. I could have been kicked out on my backside," he said. "I can't describe the rage inside, but I am getting counselling for it. I am getting two types of counselling: one is personal, one is with my wife."

"What happened with my wife I deeply regret and that will live with me forever. I don't blame the likes of the women's rights for wanting me to be kicked out of the squad. They had a right to say that and I have to live with that."

"It is hard to meet up with a stranger and talk about my problems, but I feel a better person for it already. People at the club [Rangers], the players here, have noticed it. It is helping me relax with opponents and referees."

"I'm under pressure a lot more than other players and have been so for about five to six years. I have just let everything bottle up inside me instead of coming out with things. The thing with my wife was my last straw and now I've started to sort it out and I'm really pleased."

"Tony [Adams] and Paul [Merson] - both recovering alcoholics - have said that coming out and talking about it helps. I reached the decision [to have counselling] because of what I did. I just could not believe that was me the following morning. I just had to get it sorted out."

"In the past I've done things which I've regretted, but I've tried to hide that by joking and pretending I didn't regret them. I want to think about things before I do them now. I want to be accepted as Paul Gascoigne the person as well as Paul Gascoigne the footballer. I only have five years left as a foot-

baller, then it is just Paul Gascoigne the person."

He denied that alcohol was at the root of his problems. "I can still have a drink," he said. "It is controlled, like when I'm out at a restaurant."

One hopes he knows what he is doing. It was after an afternoon at a restaurant, in Scotland's Gleneagles Hotel, that Gascoigne committed the assault on his wife, Sheryl, which left her with facial bruises and dislocated fingers.

Gascoigne, who had further counselling on Sunday, added: "In the past, I seemed to hate everybody for no apparent reason. That is one thing I am getting rid of, when I go on the pitch. I want it to be with a controlled aggression."

Whether he gets on the pitch on Saturday is another matter. Hoddle admitted he might be left out and said: "It would be a slight test for him, not one he would want, but maybe a test he needs."

"He's not hiding from it anymore. He will be judged further down the line - anyone can change for two weeks. I'm looking at 12 months, but he is already facing up to a lot of the issues which he has never done before."

"He is in the squad as part of the overall package. It is partly to help him to become a better player in the long term, but also to deal with these issues. I do not think leaving him out would have helped him or his family life."

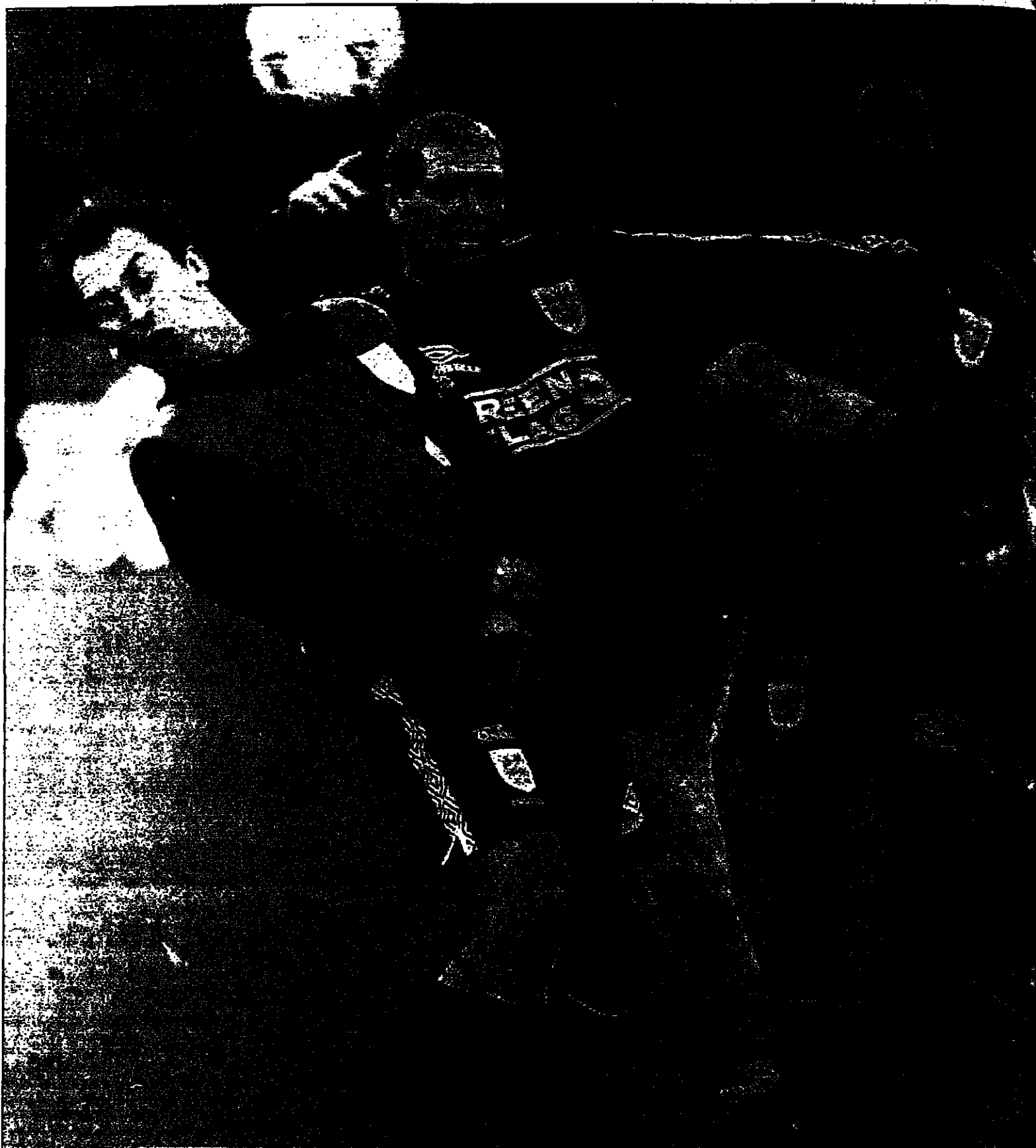
Hoddle, who gave Adams permission to leave the camp for counselling on his drink problem yesterday, added: "I'm not an agony aunt. This is part of man management, looking at a player as a person, not just a player. I've always had that philosophy."

"In many ways, Paul is hitting his prime. If he can get his personal life together we could see a Paul Gascoigne nobody has seen yet. That would be fantastic. He will have to adjust his game. There are moments of magic he can still conjure up, and although they might be less frequent, he can be part of the jigsaw in many other ways."

It took an Italian journalist to raise the conundrum: "If he becomes an ordinary person, will he also become an ordinary footballer?"

One thought of Eric Cantona as Hoddle replied: "I don't know. We do not have a crystal ball to look into. Paul has been given a gift from an early age - many things have clogged him. If we can release them, he could yet show that there is another Paul Gascoigne even [better] than in his heyday at Tottenham."

Letters, page 13
More football, page 27



Paul Gascoigne makes his presence felt by David Platt (left) in training yesterday, while Ian Wright watches from a distance. Photograph: Peter Jones

United rule out Giggs

Ryan Giggs and Nathan Blake have been excluded from the Wales squad for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against the Netherlands in Eindhoven.

Giggs, who has missed Manchester United's last six games with a calf strain, has been replaced by Birmingham's Jason Bowen, while the Liverpool youngster Lee Jones steps in for Blake of Sheffield United.

Colin Hendry has been passed fit to play in Scotland's World Cup qualifier against Sweden at Ibrox on Sunday. The Blackburn defender safely negotiated his comeback game against Liverpool on Sunday, after being absent for a month following a groin operation.

Peter Taylor, the England Under-21 manager, has lost four members of his squad for Friday's European Under-21 Championship qualifier against Georgia in Batumi due to injuries: Ben Thatcher (Wimbledon), Marcus Hall (Coventry), Chris Holland (Birmingham) and Phil Stamp (Middlesbrough).

Taylor, who now has just 17 players at his disposal, will call up replacements today. The Crewe striker, Brian Laudens, has been added to the Republic of Ireland's Under-21 squad for Saturday's match against Iceland at Dalymount Park, Dublin. Watford's David Connolly and Bournemouth's Owen Coll have pulled out.

Italy call for Ravanelli and Di Matteo

Fabrizio Ravanelli, the Middlesbrough striker, and the Chelsea midfielder Roberto Di Matteo are on their way to Sarajevo to play for Italy in a friendly against Bosnia tomorrow, writes Rupert Meehan.

Arrigo Sacchi, Italy's coach, has had to alter his squad as Juventus and Internazionale face Italian Cup replays tomorrow.

Also called up is Gianluigi Lentini, whose career was nearly ended by head injuries suffered in a car crash three years ago. Lentini, 27, currently with Atalanta on loan from Milan, last played for Italy in June 1993.

Ravanelli and Di Matteo, both regulars in Italy's World Cup side, were due to be rested for this trip - the first in-

ternational at the Kosevo Stadium since the ceasefire in Sarajevo - but both have now had to abandon their week off.

Roberto Baggio, the former Italian international, was released from hospital yesterday after a scan showed no damage from a serious blow to the head received while playing for Milan against Atalanta on Sunday.

Manchester United's Jordi Cruyff has been dropped from the Dutch squad for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Wales in Eindhoven. He was substituted at half-time in the Netherlands' 3-1 win in Cardiff last month.

Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp, who missed that match due to injury, is recalled; while Celtic's Pierre Van Hooijdonk, who scored twice as a late substitute at the Arms Park, is likely to start this time.

David Ginola's fine form for Newcastle has failed to find favour with Aimé Jacquet, the French coach, who has once again left Ginola out of his squad for Saturday's international friendly against Denmark in Copenhagen.

Rovers widen search

ALAN NIXON

Blackburn Rovers are to seek permission to approach three managers - Howard Kendall, Bruce Rioch and Peter Reid - about the vacancy at Ewood Park.

The Rovers owner Jack Walker and the chairman Robert Coar, who want the new man in position by the home game against Chelsea on 16 November, have shortlisted the trio for the job that could carry a £500,000 a year salary after being turned down by Terry Venables.

Sheffield United, Queen's Park Rangers and Sunderland are to be asked to give the go-ahead for negotiations to begin. Kendall, who has managed Rovers before, has a release clause in his contract should a Premier League side show interest in his services. Rioch works without a contract at QPR where he is Stuart Houston's No 2, while Reid, the outsider who has turned Sunderland around on a shoestring budget, is expected to be attracted by the chance to work

with virtually unlimited funds.

A former Rover, Kenny Dalglish, who led the club to the championship in 1995, has been asked by Rangers to help them become one of the foremost clubs in Europe. The former Celtic and Liverpool forward has been offered a high-profile position helping to lure the Continent's top players to Ibrox.

Rangers' manager, Walter Smith, who rebuffed suggestions that Dalglish's arrival could put his own position under threat, said: "We had a meeting with Kenny Dalglish before the Ajax match last week. We have yet to arrange another meeting but that will be done shortly and hopefully we will be able to make an announcement."

Should Dalglish take up the offer, he would not be scouting for young talent; he would be put in charge of tracking established players and submitting any choices to Smith.

Tottenham are reported to be on the verge of paying Rosenborg £1.75m for the 19-year-old Norwegian striker Stefan Iversen. Aston Villa, meanwhile, are confident that Savo Milosevic's £4.5m transfer to Perugia will go

ahead after the forward completes his World Cup duty for Yugoslavia against the Czech Republic on Sunday.

Hartlepool, second from bottom in the Third Division, have sacked their manager Keith Houchen. The player-coach Mick Tait has taken over as caretaker, but the club are to advertise the position.

"It's a sad day, but these things happen," Houchen said. "I needed the players to be men on the pitch, but I'm afraid all too often they didn't do it for me. The fans need to get behind the chairman. Unfortunately, I have not always had their support from the terraces."

Ian Wallace, the former Scotland striker, will be hoping to win over Dumbarton's following after being appointed manager of the Scottish Second Division side. He takes over from Jim Fallon who resigned at the weekend after the 5-0 defeat at Livingston. Wallace, who commanded a £1m transfer fee when he moved from Coventry to Nottingham Forest, will have his work cut out. Dumbarton are the only Scottish League side yet to record a home victory.

Maradona's DIY drug tests

Diego Maradona, the former Argentinian captain, has admitted taking drugs on a regular basis and missing matches when his own private dope tests have been positive.

Maradona, 36, who says he has been taking cocaine since 1983, told the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* that recent allegations that his urine sample was switched with another player's after a routine post-match test on 11 August were unfounded.

The other player's sample, from Boca's opponents Estudiantes, was found to be positive. Maradona, whose test was negative, has not played for the club since then and went to a Swiss clinic for treatment shortly after the match.

"It's a load of nonsense. Because for years I have done my own anti-doping controls on my own, during the week before the match. And if I tested positive in my tests, I did not play,"

Maradona said. "And I played that time, didn't I?"

In 1994 he was banned from internationals for 15 months after failing a dope test at the World Cup finals.

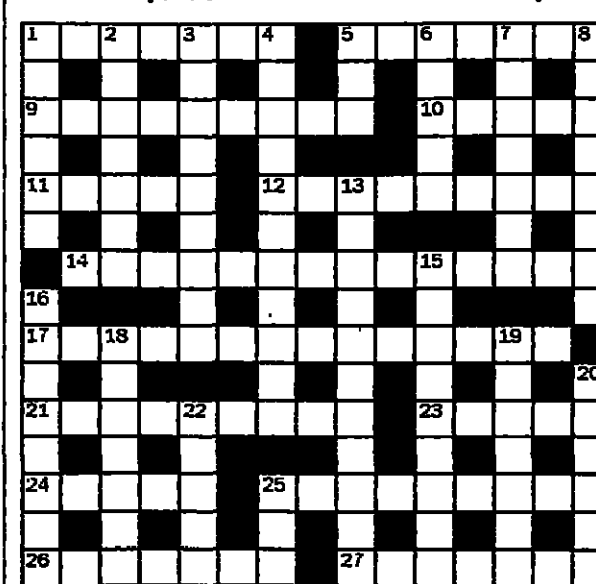
And in 1991 he was banned for 15 months for testing positive for cocaine while playing for Napoli. When asked whether he would play again, Maradona replied: "Yes, I think so. I will play at least one match with Boca before the end of the year."

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3136, Tuesday 5 November

By Aired

Monday's Solution



FINISH CLAIMS
MAKES ISSUE VALUE
WISDOM PAID
NEEL CONVENTION
AL LASSY IN NY
TILLINOIS ANGLE
Y U S G C R
ORDER BEASTS
R O S L A M O
INGREDIENT OTO
A E M S O P E K
LIAMA SMALLIAMS
T U O S U I
BELDIAM DIMPICE

- ACROSS**
- In which one's cruel as a rule (7)
 - About to crease and collapse (7)
 - Complaint I had after house became not quite solid (9)
 - Expenses of Street in Greek island (5)
 - Terrorism's not altogether a mistake (5)
 - Cruel description of three-suited hand? (9)
 - This Leander was idolised (4-10)
 - Colleague's position when confronting anaesthetist? (8,6)
 - Shade of sad Prince? (5,4)
 - Stop belovéd embracing bachelor (5)
 - Fear keeping right? Exactly (5)
 - Two crabs I found crawling in rubbish (4-1-4)

- DOWN**
- One trying the Northern English chemical (6)
 - Sorrow shown about code (7)
 - No fair use could be described as wicked (9)
 - One's accommodating to teenagers? (5,6)
 - King left Queen, say, being a rounder (3)
 - Crude diamonds are not reduced (5)
 - Decorate ceiling? It's to see what paper's like (5-2)
 - Part of New York with no story? (4,4)
 - A distinctly underwhelming presence? (11)

- 15** Urgency with which I'm going with TV etc. to Cyprus (9)
- 16** Unit of power? (8)
- 18** Confined to retain possible May disturbance? (7)
- 19** Ban English doctor on Jason's ship
- 20** Place for mothers who don't care for babies? (6)
- 22** Heavy and in want of energy? Could be (5)
- 23** Insect showing strength shortly (3)

Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford

Tuesday 5 November 1992 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

Aficio Colour 2003



The £9,995 Aficio Colour Copier. It's the Jackson Pollocks. Only cheaper.

Don't splash out if you want to make a big impression with colour. Ricoh's Aficio 2000 Series are the first laser colour copiers to start below £10,000. For more information (no Pollocks) FREEPHONE 0800 303050.

RICOH

Your most reliable office worker.

سكنا من الامل